

HORIZONS OF MEANING AND BIOGRAPHICAL LINKAGES
IN THE INTERVIEW NARRATIVES OF
HOMELESS MEN AND WOMEN

By

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by

John Bilbra Talmage

This project is
dedicated to

The memory of My Mother
and to
My Father
and to
My Sister and Brother-in-Law
and to
My Brother and Sister-in-Law
and to
My Children, Neices and Nephews

without whose love, support and encouragement I would never have known the
meaning of "home" that I will always covet for my homeless friends--those I have come
to know and care for during the course of this study.

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This project portrays "homelessness" from the perspective of homeless people. It explores meanings in the lives of homeless men and women through an analysis of narrative interviews conducted over a one-year period. The narrative linkages made by the respondents were both biographically specific and, at the same time, constituted shared horizons of understanding, making the interviews a fertile ground to understand the indigenous meanings of homeless people as they craft their lives on the streets.

The central themes around which meanings were formed by the respondents in this study are time, place (or placelessness), fear, affiliation, and the moral order of the streets. As they link temporal events to their own experience, they demonstrate within their narratives that conventional time is of

little or no practical value to life on the streets. The experiential realities of the street world are better understood in terms of broad strokes of time, time marked, for example, by daylight and dark, or other temporal constructions that arise out of passive responses to the demands of street life.

Being homeless is more than not having a shelter; it is to be without place and thus without an anchor in the social world. The temporal and spatial dimensions of social life are conventionally linked to provide a matrix for the organization of social life. Without this, many homeless people see themselves as existing outside of the structures of the social world. "Life outside" is unpredictable, dangerous, and frightening, making it difficult to form significant friendships or to maintain relationships with friends and family who live within a conventionally structured world. Experiencing fear, instability, and loneliness, homeless people suspend the conventional moral order in pursuit of their own survival. This further destabilizes their world as alcoholism, exploitation, and violence are taken-for-granted qualities of living.

CHAPTER 1 THE PROJECT

The Purpose of the Project

As any review of the literature on homelessness will reveal, most of the research on the homeless population has focused on demographic factors, mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, the plight of families, the needs of homeless people, and the causes of homelessness, among other nonsubjective accounts. While this literature is informative in its own right, little research has been done to explore the "homeless" world from the perspective of those who live on the streets as they narratively construct their lives to investigators. Three studies that are exceptions are Christopher Elias and Thomas Inui's (1993) project in which they studied elderly homeless men in Seattle, Brackette Williams' (1995) project that studied the consequences of the interlinked and reflexive readings of citizens and beggars reading each other as texts in New York and Tucson, and Liebow's (1993) project that explored the lives of homeless women as they told the stories of their lives in their own voices. In order to understand the perspective of homeless people regarding the meaning of their lives on the streets and to gain some comprehension of the richness, complexity, and individual variability in the everyday meaning of homelessness,

this project stakes out a different approach. Based on narrative interviews and participant observation with a sample of homeless adult men and women, and a sensitivity to indigenous accounts, I will show that the meaning of "homeless" *on the streets* is anything but categorically fixed or uniformly describable.

"Homeless," I argue, has diverse horizons of meaning, not necessarily our own, evidenced in the varied linkages that homeless persons construct from their experiences.

Genesis of the Project

The project began as an annual survey of the homeless population in Jacksonville, Florida, in which I participated with other faculty members and students from the University of North Florida. As a part of this project, interviews were conducted with approximately 300 homeless people, primarily in shelters, but also on the streets. The interview contained 57 items, most of which were closed-ended, but also some open-ended questions that were to be coded. The responses to all of these questions were entered into a data set from which the characteristics, needs, and demographic characteristics of homeless men and women were to be drawn. In addition to the open-ended questions, interviewers were instructed to make marginal notes regarding appearances, voluntary comments, attitudes, observations of behavior, and other information regarding these people that they thought relevant.

It was in reviewing this information that I began to see patterns of meaning constructed by those interviewed that could profitably be analyzed in their own right. To explore this further, I eventually met with staff members of shelters and conducted exploratory interviews with several homeless people. In the process, I enlisted clients of one of the shelters who were in varying stages of "rehabilitation" to assist me in "gaining entry" to the streets. Later, I asked two other men who were formerly homeless to join the team. Eventually, seeking the participatory involvement of my respondents, I asked this "research team" to give me their input as to possible interview guide questions and finally asked them to do some of the interviewing themselves.

After several sessions in which they were trained, the research team conducted a number of interviews. Using these men as interviewers, I hoped that they would be able to conduct the majority of the interviews for a study. I had reasoned, following the emerging literature on active interviewing (see Holstein and Gubrium, 1995) that the competent respondent might have a subjectively enlightened access to others similarly situated. However, as I grew to know and understand them more, and realized that all of them had serious problems with either drugs or alcohol, it became apparent to me that their "sobriety" was at risk. As they heard and listened to the stories of other homeless people, they found in the related narrative excitement a temptation to return to their old haunts and their old lifestyles. This raised a serious ethical concern as I feared that these and other factors would sufficiently threaten their

"rehabilitation." I concluded that it was unwise to subject them again to the streets without myself being present. Without further consideration, their work on the streets as independent co-researchers was terminated although I continued to use these men in jointly conducting some of the interviews. In addition, they served as "consultants" in developing interview guide questions and approaches to interviews. A significant part of the interview guide and interview process with which I conducted the research is drawn from their input.

Originally, I had intended to interview people only on the streets of Jacksonville, but after the study was well underway, a large 24-hour homeless shelter was opened and a consequent effort was made to "provide more care" to those who are homeless, or to get them "off of the streets," over and above what existing shelters provided. As a result, homeless people became more scarce, or at least less visible, on the streets of Jacksonville. To compensate for this, I have also included in the study persons who are regarded as chronically homeless, but who have some interaction with the shelters.

An occupational hazard of the researcher who orients to those whom he or she studies in objective and detached terms is to see them in terms of the meanings applied by the researcher rather than as observing them as they construct meaning in their own right. In the course of conducting the project, through listening to homeless people as they told their stories and constructed their meanings, I experienced myself as the outsider to whom they have told

their stories (Williams, 1995). This has permitted me to deal with homeless people in their own terms and in a language of their own construction.

But it would be naive to think that this is only homeless peoples' constructions of their lives. More to the point, all narratives, and these in particular, are inevitably jointly constructed by both researcher and acting subject alike in interaction together (Gubrium, 1993). This study and its findings are offered in this context and spirit.

Method of Procedure

The method of procedure for the project has been to conduct and analyze in-depth interviews with homeless people, supplemented by related participant observation. The interviews were designed to facilitate narrative life construction and to elicit accounts of a way of life, so to speak. I developed the interview guide with my "research team," including questions from Gubrium's (1993) Speaking of Life, a similar narrative ethnography of the construction of the quality of life and the quality of care in a nursing home. The interview guide is included as an Appendix.

It should be noted that the interview guide took the form of a guide, not a directive, as I determined early in the project to let the interviews run on without any more intervention than was necessary. Also, many of the respondents who participated in the interviews were more interested in telling their story as they saw fit than answering someone else's specific interview questions. Some of the

interviews were taped and others were reconstructed from interview notes. Still others were recorded in self-styled short-hand by students who accompanied me on the interviews.

During the early part of the project, I attempted to use an additional method for obtaining narrative interviews, that being to lend an inexpensive camera with a role of film to a homeless person and ask him or her to "take pictures of their world." By this, I meant for them to take photographs of the sights that typified their world so that we might look at the same photographs as they told their stories. My hope was that I would be able to meet them the following day, retrieve the camera, have the film developed and then interview them regarding the contents of their photographs.

I encountered two problems with this approach. The first was a matter of time. The photographs captured something of the sense of space from their perspective, but the method restricted the temporal dimension to their "present." In this sense, the method was restrictive and failed to display the richness and diversity of their lives that becomes visible through open-ended interviews.

The second problem was more practical. It seems that, to the homeless people to whom I lent the cameras, the cameras were more valued as barter in the street economy than for their value in the research project. After failing to recover 11 of the cameras and the film included with them, I feared that I might join the ranks of the homeless if I persisted with this method, as it was expensive to replace them. I did use this method on a limited basis, however, and the

results of two of the interviews that included the photographs are included in this project. They will be encountered in chapter four in the interviews with "George" and "Tommy."

Gaining Access

When I first considered doing a research project on homeless persons, it seemed that access to informants from the homeless population would be one of the simpler problems to solve. After all, I had been approached by homeless people with their requests for money, seen them sleeping on park benches, observed them pushing their carts, carrying all of their worldly goods, and had been involved in the annual homeless count where we went to homeless shelters and interviewed them. The problem seemed sufficiently minimal as to warrant little or no real consideration.

As I began the project, I was usually accompanied by members of my "homeless research team," that was eventually expanded to include students from the University. These people frequently were the questioners who, when identified, will appear as Tommy, Little John, Robert, or in the case of the students, Marshall, Sid or Ellen, in the following chapters. In the course of the interviews, homeless and student members of the research team, along with myself, are all identified in the interviews by the letter "Q" to designate the origin of the question and not the particular person who did the questioning.

Identification of homeless people by the homeless members of the research team was so taken for granted as to obscure my impending difficulties with identification. It was not until I began to go into the field by myself, or accompanied by students, that identification of homeless persons became problematic. When I began to look for "homeless" people, utilizing my own perceptual resources, I encountered a veritable multitude of people who "looked" homeless, but who turned out not to be, or people who "looked" reasonably established, and thus unapproachable for the purposes of the project, but who were, in fact, homeless.

The problems of identification of homeless respondents is perhaps better demonstrated by several anecdotes. When I was supervising the interview process at one of the shelters during the homeless count, one of the volunteers came to me asking how she should deal with a person who said that he was not homeless and, in fact, was paying rent. I talked with the person in question and found him highly incensed. Although he was living in what was regarded as a homeless shelter, it was a transitional facility where the rent of a large number of people who lived there, and who did not work, was covered by subsidized housing funds, and those who worked paid one third of their income for rent, to an upper limit of \$300 per month. The man with whom I was speaking worked out of a labor pool and paid an average of \$150 per month rent. Was he homeless or not? He said "no," and we did not interview him, but he lived in an

officially designated homeless facility, and worked for the labor pool, and so was counted as one of the homeless people in the homeless count.

On another occasion, I tentatively approached a man in a park that was typically inhabited by homeless people. He was standing by a pond feeding bread to the ducks, and did not look appreciably different from others in the park. Soon after I began talking with him, however, I found that he had been married to the same wife since his early 20s, owned his own home, which was paid for, and had a larger income than I did. The reason he was in the park was, as he said, "to get away from the old lady," which had little or nothing to do with being homeless.

The problem was more complex than the difficulty of identifying homeless people, however. On a Saturday afternoon, when I was sitting in a different park with a student, we were approached by a man who had come to the park in a van with the name of a church printed on the side. As he approached us, I heard him asking,

Do you want something to eat? Like a meal. I'll be back in 30 minutes, and if you want to, jus' come with me and we'll go down to the church and get you one. All you got to do is go to the worship service for jus' a little while, then you can eat and I'll have you right back here before dark."

I looked around to identify a person who would obviously be homeless (one whom perhaps I might interview), only to realize two things: first, there was no one behind me, and secondly, at the student's prompting, I realized that he was

talking to us. We had been identified as homeless persons by a representative of a mission.

On another occasion, dressed in old and dirty clothes that I had been wearing for several days to work on a sailboat, I had gone to the plaza in the middle of the downtown area very early one morning (approximately 6:00 a.m.) to confirm recent rumors that the police were "cleaning out the park" by not allowing homeless people to sleep there. I spoke with a man who was sitting on a park bench and, again, "looked" homeless. He concurred that homeless people were being run out of the plaza and had no place to sleep or rest. Noticing a police officer not far distant, I commented that he did not seem concerned with our presence. The man suggested that this was because we were not lying down on a bench. He invited me to lie down on the bench on the other side of the sidewalk and see what happened.

I accepted the invitation, lay down on the bench, and pulled my cap over my face. Within approximately two minutes, I felt the nudge of some instrument on my shoulder, and heard the words, "Hey buddy, you can't sleep here." When I removed my cap and argued with the police officer who stood above me, he informed me that he could arrest me if I didn't follow his order to sit up and move on. He was taken aback when I pulled a micro-cassette recorder from my pocket and started to record the conversation. With anxiety in his voice, he asked me what I was doing. When I told him that I was doing research on homeless people and their perception of the social world's responses to them, in particular

those of the police, he asked if I were a college professor. I answered yes, and he questioned me further. Through a process of deduction, he determined that I was the professor whose class he was hoping to take that summer, and he replied, "Oh, shit!" At this point, we both had bargaining chips and the "issue" was resolved when he bought my breakfast. During the meal, he said that he was usually pretty good at recognizing homeless people, but maybe he wasn't as good as he thought, as he had clearly identified me as homeless.

Stories that illustrate the problems associated with identifying homeless persons might go on well beyond this, but that is not the purpose of this project. Suffice it to say that identification of homeless persons became a major problem, and one that was never fully resolved.

There were other problems associated with "the informants." One such problem was what later turned out to be a recurring theme among them, notably "placelessness." While some of the respondents included this as a part of their narratives, I experienced it first hand in efforts to interview people on the streets. In sum, the problem of placelessness resulted from a lack of consistent community membership in which to meet and interview members of that community. More often than not, the respondents' areas of activity covered two to three square miles that they covered by walking and, consistent with the rest of their lives, their usual pattern of activity was to drift from place to place with no regular routes or routinized itinerary. The possible exception was their return to

their "catholes" at night, and even that was not a very predictable occurrence, nor one to which I had access in any event.

Closely related to this was another problem related to place. Lacking place, these people had no location in which to talk in confidence. Shelters, in particular, weren't considered to be private places. They were willing to talk about problems of homeless people in general, but were reluctant to tell their own life stories when in the "public eye." On several occasions, I had men tell me that they would be willing to talk if we could find some place in which we could conduct the interview in privacy. This raised the issue of intrusion, one that became very difficult to overcome. These people lived most of their lives on someone else's turf and they conveyed on numerous occasions that they had no privacy and no sense of turf where they felt in control. They typically viewed this quality of "homelessness" as either a condition from which they "suffered" or in other terms, such as identifying their homelessness with drug or alcohol use, and, thus, being morally flawed. To tell their stories, then, required them to reveal private details of their lives that would make them cognizant of their own vulnerability to the normative judgments of the domiciled world that they perceived us as representing.

Another problem associated with obtaining informants and gaining access to chronically homeless people was that, frequently, many had become sufficiently distrusting as to make them fearful of talking with someone who was not "one of them." And because of the lack of trust even among each other, it did

not help to attempt to "go native" with them. I had one man tell me that if I had come out to the park dressed like a college teacher ought to dress, he would have been willing to talk, but since I was trying to be someone I was not, he couldn't trust me enough to talk. There were other people who would be unwilling to talk at one time and, at another, for no apparent reason, would be perfectly willing to talk.

Two other problems are issues of context and the question of safety. As will be seen throughout these interviews, many of these people have a strong sense of distrust for each other. Many have criminal pasts, some for violent crimes, and many of them have not changed their ways. In informal conversations, I spoke with several of them about prison life that had resulted from attempted murder, assault and battery, or burglary. Some with whom I spoke had an almost protective attitude toward me and toward the students who often accompanied me, refusing to allow us to go into certain areas as they were "afraid somethin' bad might happen" to us. This meant that many areas, and the people who inhabited them, were inaccessible for the purpose of carrying out the project. Without access to the social worlds they referenced, it was practically impossible to understand the context from which these people spoke. This problem occurred not only in "dangerous areas," but in gaining access to what appeared to be casual conversations as well. While this might be viewed as negative, it was actually a positive thing in shaping the final form of the project as it forced me to attend to their words and allowed me to be "the stranger"

(Schutz, 1970), not becoming so familiar with their world that I could take the indigenous meanings contained within it for granted.

For many of these reasons, it was either unwise or impractical to "be there" in the sense of getting close to the realities of the field. To explore the subjective meanings that informed the lives of homeless people was thus effectively limited to a narrative analysis of in-depth interviews, and this at times was difficult because of these same problems.

It is obvious, however, that I did gain sufficient access to enable me to carry out the research that is described here. For the most part, this was done utilizing four primary methods. First, as described above, in the earlier days of the project, I had begun developing a "research team" among people who were still homeless and who had lived on the streets, but who were presently residing in shelters or other more conventional dwellings. These men were helpful in introducing me to people on the streets, as they had their own means both of identifying them and identifying with them.

Second, as a part of the process we used to train them to do interviewing, the team members brought respondents into our training sites. They interviewed these people themselves, and we critiqued their interviews. Their interviews often took the form of conversations between and among homeless people and thus added an interesting "naturalistic" dimension to the narrative construction in which I was interested. Some of these interviews are included in this project.

Third, I had access to the staffs of three different shelter facilities and these people introduced me to people who met the criteria of the categories of homeless people that I had initially specified. These categories included people who would be defined as homeless according to the following criteria, the first three of which were cited by Jencks (1994):

- 1) They said they had no home or permanent place to live.
- 2) They said their home was a shelter, a hotel paid for with vouchers for the homeless, or a place not intended for sleeping.
- 3) They said they lived in someone else's home but did not have a regular arrangement allowing them to stay there at least five days a week.
- 4) They said that they had matched one of these criteria for a minimum of one year.

The stories of many homeless people to whom I was introduced by the "homeless research team" and by the shelter staffs were frequently repetitious, but the narratives of other homeless people, to whom I was introduced, were extremely enlightening and contributed novel perspectives

Fourth, another means of gaining access to the informants was to go to where homeless people were, such as public parks in the downtown area, or in certain sparsely inhabited areas around the waterfront, and approach them, or wait for them to approach me. While this may seem a bit far-fetched, it is not when one considers that I typically brought one to three packs of cigarettes with

me. Frequently, they would ask if I had a smoke. I would then give them a cigarette and attempt to engage them in conversation. If that were productive, I would tell them what I was doing and ask for an interview. If they agreed, I kept them in cigarettes until the interview was complete. If not, I saved the cigarettes for someone who agreed to the interview. Again, I had a personal problem with this approach, but it was effective. The problem I experienced was that I felt it was practically an event that resembled a "fishing expedition," using the cigarettes as bait.

The Informants

The Sample

Approximately forty-five people were interviewed and, of these, twenty-two interviews have been utilized in this study. The others were not used for a variety of reasons such as redundancy, lack of focus, or incoherence due to drug or alcohol usage. For example, it takes little imagination to understand the difficulty in reading, understanding and analyzing an interview with someone who was inebriated to the point that he continued to ask in what state he was in. Nor is it difficult to understand the problems in "deciphering" an interview with someone who appears to be sufficiently incoherent to suggest diagnosable mental illness, even though that was not our task or skill as we explored life on the streets. Or again, large parts of many interviews were unintelligible because

of the difficulty of understanding the dialects of the respondents when the interviews had been recorded in the open spaces.

The people whom I interviewed do not live in a vacuum. They are fully a part of the "homeless" scene. Yet, at the same time, it is the purpose of this project to show at least some of the variation in experience that comprises the homeless lifestyle. In keeping with this goal, I did not attempt to select any kind of random sample, nor to concern myself particularly with representativeness. Except for two or three respondents who had been on the streets "full time" for only a year or so, the men and women whose stories are included in this project are, for the most part, chronically homeless people in every sense of the word, and had lived on the streets for anywhere from eight to twenty years.

Some of these people are almost completely marginalized in relation to the broader social structures. By this, I mean that they have no known relationship to any domiciled group, such as family, any work organization, any social service agency, or any governmental body that might offer affiliation or services. They reluctantly use shelters for emergency shelter during inclement weather, or for food or medical care in emergency situations. They do not, however, participate in any kind of regular programs of assistance or any kind of "rehabilitation" to homeless people. Other respondents are related marginally to shelters, social service agencies, and social groups, such as families or churches, but they do not have any regular sleeping accommodations, preferring instead to sleep on the streets, under the bridges, in abandoned buildings or in

other residual spaces. Some of these people utilize what will be termed "mission time" to sleep in missions or shelters, and will frequently use missions and shelters for food or to obtain medical care. Out of the total population that I interviewed, only two individuals were in programs that connected them in permanent, or quasi-permanent ways to shelters or social service agencies for homeless persons. The remainder lived their lives effectively on the streets, although many have had temporary or emergency relations with these agencies and two have in some sense gone ahead to a greater degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency. But even they are not among those who regularly stay in, or otherwise utilize, the services of the shelters, missions, or agencies.

Of course, there are exceptions to this chronically homeless profile among the respondents. One of those included, who still considers himself homeless, whom the reader will come to know by his assigned pseudonym as Billy Bob, has saved from a meager income and has recently purchased an RV (recreational vehicle) trailer and a pickup truck, both of which were very inexpensive, and which he restored to some degree of usability. Billy Bob also has a checking account, with a monthly disability check deposited directly to it, which is accessible through ATMs. Many of the people with whom I spoke have access to some kind of funds, be those funds in the amount of \$100-200 dollars from SSI, social security disability pensions, a veterans administration pension, or periodic work with a labor pool. Billy Bob is clearly the exception in that he has become sober and has made efficient use of his small income to acquire a

form of shelter and transportation. According to many, he would no longer be considered as homeless, although he identifies himself as homeless, without permanent home or family.

Another exception the reader will meet is Dutch. Dutch had left drug rehabilitation the day I interviewed him. He had intermittently lived in homes in various cities for the past five or six years, and was to do so again. However, his predominant lifestyle was that of "homeless," as it was at the time of the interview. His time spent in drug rehabilitation does not disqualify him for this categorization in that many of the homeless people have been through rehabilitation programs for substance abuse and leave the treatment programs with no place to go. Dutch was leaving the confining environment of the rehab center, and planned, as he said, to have reestablished himself on the streets of Jacksonville by sundown.

Demographic Characteristics

Even while their subjective understandings vary considerably, four major demographic characteristics serve to include the people I interviewed in the world of homeless people. The first is concerned with the percentage of homeless people who are either addicted to or abuse alcohol and/or drugs on a regular basis. The general consensus of those who have studied homeless people is that approximately 50% of homeless people are thought to be addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. I have not approached this project as a study in

substance abuse, nor would I be prepared to do so. However, it will be noted throughout that many, if not all, of the informants are, or have been, deeply involved in the use of alcohol and/or drugs. In addition, it will be seen that the perception of most of those interviewed is that most of the people who live on the streets are "into drugs and alcohol."

This is a different perception from that which is quoted in much of the literature and among agency people who work with homeless persons. Possible explanations for this variation would likely include the difference in locale where homeless people are more likely to participate in a local culture of substance abuse. Or again, the difference might be attributed to today's virtually epidemic public concern over substance abuse. Or perhaps the particular respondents that I encountered have a higher incidence of substance abuse due to long term life on the streets, and are not characteristic of the homeless population in general as observed by many researchers (Bahr, 1973; Snow and Anderson, 1993) and, in particular, those included in the homeless count. It would seem, through my involvement in the homeless count, that this last explanation is the most reasonable, as the total population of homeless people includes families who are temporarily dislocated, children in foster homes, adults who are recently out of work and homeless and who primarily live in the shelters and missions. It appears that the percentage of these categories of homeless people might well have far fewer than 50% who abuse alcohol and/or drugs. The longer term, chronically homeless people include a number of people who admit that drugs

and alcohol are the reasons for their being out of work and homeless and a significant number of homeless people suggest that they engage in heavy drug/alcohol use to anesthetize themselves against the pain of being unsheltered. Still others seem to become deeply involved in heavy drug and/or alcohol use as a part of their lifestyle, or, in a phrase, just because the drugs and alcohol are there. At any rate, among those with whom I spoke who are chronically homeless, an extremely high percentage are presently involved in heavy drug/alcohol usage, and would be considered addicted by most criteria.

A second characteristic relates to the conventional wisdom that there is an extraordinarily high incidence of mental illness among homeless people. In a sense, I follow Elliot Liebow (1993) in saying that my business on the streets has not been to diagnose these people, and even if this were my purpose, it remains unclear to me exactly what would constitute mental illness among chronically homeless people. For the most part, mental illness relates to the norms of a domiciled world. It has to do with behaviors that fall outside of acceptable social norms that are diagnosable by mental health professionals. Among those with whom I spoke, most would fit some diagnostic category or other, if for no other reason than that they have failed to adjust or conform to social norms associated with living in conventional dwellings. Of course, many appear to have a depressed affect, and exhibit other signs of mental illness. But I am not certain that I would not be a bit depressed if I were living in these particular conditions. It seems to me that most of these people are lucid, they have adjusted to their

situation in ways that are reasonable, many maintain a sense of humor, and most provide reasoned accounts of their lives, given the assumptions of their homeless situation. In a word, I have not experienced these people to be mad, irrational, or otherwise "insane."

There are two remaining categorical observations of the people who have been included in this study. A majority of them are black and they are predominantly male. In light of the results of studies of homeless people that focus on demographics, this is not surprising. This is consistent with the demographics cited in studies of homeless people that find that black people are over represented in the homeless population and that the percentage of homeless who are black, or have some other minority status, is increasing (Rossi, Wright, Fischer, and Willis, 1987).

The fourth observation is that a minority of those included in this study are women. This has been due to two factors: 1) Women constitute a relatively small, but growing percentage of the homeless population, if we think of the homeless as living on the street or otherwise being unsheltered. However, many of the women who are homeless live in shelters of one kind or another. While I interviewed some respondents who were marginally related to shelters, my research interests were not primarily aimed at those who are either residents of shelters or participants in "homeless" programs, but toward those who are chronically homeless and live a majority of their lives on the streets. Only a small minority of the women I have encountered actually live most of their lives

on the streets. 2) Being male, I have not had the ease of access to women on the streets I would have liked. As will be seen in the interviews, many of these women stay with men for "protection," and it is difficult to approach them without threatening the men with whom they are staying.

For these reasons, a majority of those included in the study are black and an equally large percentage are male. This is consistent with the broader demographic parameters of the homeless population.

Method of Analysis

The Approach

The purpose of this project has been to inquire into the lives of two categories of homeless people: 1) those who live beyond the boundaries of the normal structures of the domiciled world but are recipients of the services of human service agencies, and 2) those whose lives are only marginally related to human service agencies. My goal was to obtain their subjective understanding of their circumstances in relation to their own horizons of meaning through an analysis of related interview narratives.

There are several reasons for this approach. As I will describe in greater detail in the next chapter, much of the literature views homeless men and women as *objects* of study. The overwhelming effort is to categorize different aspects of their lives from an objective point of view in order to render their lives comprehensible within the framework of statistical analyzes and taxonomies of

the researchers' own making. While this form of research contributes much to the task of making certain dimensions of the lives of homeless people intelligible to both researcher and reader, and indeed may be necessary for certain purposes of human inquiry and the development of social policy, it nevertheless has the tendency to reduce homeless peoples' lives to categories foreign to the experiential realities of their everyday lives. The categories represent them in ways that fail to exhibit the richness and diversity of their lived experience. Narrative description and analysis, on the other hand, bring forth the complexity, diversity, and richness of social life (Bruner, 1986; Gubrium, 1993). When applied to homeless men's lives, it makes visible a world that is not otherwise accessible. Narrative analysis and description go beyond merely making the worlds of subjects visible, however. This form of inquiry frames the life of homeless men in a way that makes their life intelligible in its complexity. In Speaking of Life, Gubrium (1993) has shown the breadth and depth of the social world of the nursing home by articulating the formulation of quality of care through the subjective meaning that residents bring to it. The quality of care and the quality of life of those who inhabit the nursing home are reframed in a manner that makes the nursing home experience intelligible on its own terms (Gubrium, 1993).

Liebow has moved in this same direction by giving voice to homeless women. Through their narratives, one hears in their words an understanding of their lives in ways that convey more than mere description. Liebow seeks to

allow these women to tell the stories of their lives in ways that the hearer, Liebow, can understand in the words of the women themselves. He can then represent them more faithfully to his audience that now becomes their audience along with him (Liebow, 1993).

There is a difference, however, between the treatment of narratives in the studies done by Liebow and Gubrium. Liebow treats the stories of the women in his study as vehicles that primarily describe their lives without searching out the meaning embedded in them, while the narrative analysis used in Gubrium's study reflects more than the narrator's description and representation of his or her own life. In his study, he shows two things. First, he shows that his respondents' narratives draw on the linkages to the experiences of other worlds to create their lives as stories, and narrative analysis captures the respondent's knowledge of those other worlds, making them also visible (Bruner, 1986). Second, he shows the method by which they weave together the different strands of their lives to create meaning in the present circumstances in which they find themselves.

The narrative study of lives is a dual interpretive task. It must not only reflect the personal narrative as experienced and related by the subject, but it also must make sense in rendering the complexity of that personal narrative intelligible to the reader (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Cohler, 1982; Bruner, 1986). In this sense, narrative "displays subjective complexity." It is the perception of self expressed by the narrator with all of its contradictions, its

opacity and its self-revelation. It is one's own personal story and is not bound by a kind of artificial linearity that obscures personal meaning (Gubrium 1993).

Yet, in the complexity that is conveyed, there is always a striving for coherence in which the constructor of the narrative weaves together the strands of his or her experience to tell a story. Narrative analysis reaches to broader horizons than the immediate description as it displays the meaning of members' lives. In approaching social life through narrative, the researcher is able to see the richness and diversity of meaning by which people organize and make sense of their lives in the midst of their social worlds. The researcher thus accounts for the subject's social worlds that his or her narrative constitutes through the narrator's articulation of meaning (Gubrium, 1993). Narrative insists that the lives of those who tell their stories are not constructed in a vacuum. Rather, it locates people in the worlds of their experience, and furnishes the perspective by which they link their present experience to the relevant horizons, near and far (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). It is through narrative that life as experienced is lived as a meaningful whole, overcoming through its telling the tensions acquired from its sources and making intelligible, as a coherent entity, lives that are woven from the experiential fabrics of other times and places. (Cohler, 1982)

In personal narratives, life and story are internally related. "They underline that the meaning of life cannot be understood outside of the stories told about it." (Widdershoven 1993, p. 2)

Narrative and Everyday Language

Another practical consideration in utilizing narrative analysis is the role language plays in its construction. While not the major focus of the study, some attention will be paid to the subjects' use of language in structuring life narratives in the following ways.

First, the language of narrative contains the biographical linkages to the experiential events from which meaning is derived. Language and language patterns are not simply words, but are symbolic representations that have been learned from and associated with experience. They serve as conceptual tools by which members organize and account for their action and context in ways that help to rationalize the circumstances of their lives. Drawing from well established traditions, it has been argued that language does not merely externalize inner experience, but is itself involved in the construction of that inner experience (Berger and Luckman, 1968; Schutz, 1970; Coulter, 1979), as well as framing or interpreting phenomena so that it is involved in the construction of one's perception of the social world (Gubrium et al, 1994). In considering the narrative life stories of these informants, it has been important to listen to the words that they use in constructing their lives as they provide the linkage to past experience that informs the meaning of their lives in the present.

Second, language not only provides linkages to horizons of meaning in terms of past experience, but makes that experience "known" as present reality, and thus makes visible the other worlds the linkage to which serve as those

horizons. While symbols are derived from past experience, they also become realities within themselves. Drawing from Schutz, words are types. Even though it might be said that each experience of the "type" is unique, each type represents "a recurrent sameness, and as such it is experienced in a different context and with different adumbrations...Each of these types has its typical style of being experienced, and the knowledge of this typical style is itself an element of our stock of knowledge at hand." (Schutz, 1970, p.118) When the "types" to which Schutz refers include the horizons of meaning derived from other experiential realities, those realities become a part of the shared stock of knowledge and intersubjectively known to the hearer of the narrative as well as narrator. Thus, as they are implicated in the construction of narrative, symbols derived from past experience make that experience known in the present as the informants respond to those symbols contained in the linguistic construction of the narrative.

Third, language is itself an integral component of all social acts (Bruner, 1990), and the act of studying lives as constructed through narrative is to take into account the language that constructs it. As Giddens (1979, p. 245) puts it, "Language is a medium of social practice, and as such is implicated in all the variegated activities in which social actors engage." Thus, any social activity, of which narrative description is one, by definition must take into account the role of language in the construction of that narrative. The narrative accounts of chronically homeless peoples' lives are, as has been noted, their constructions

of both their lives and the meanings of their lives, and the means by which they construct their lives become accessible in the language that they use in its narrative construction. If we are to hear the "how" of their construction of their lives in their stories, it is important to hear them construct their lives as closely as possible through the use of their own language.

Locating the Experiential "Reality" of Homelessness

In conducting this form of analysis, the question of the "reality" of the experience in question and its location becomes both interesting and critical (see Gubrium and Holstein, 1987). While many inquirers into homeless life have attempted to get "close to" their subjects and hence ostensibly close to the reality of homeless life through participant observation, etc. (e.g. Anderson, 1923; Liebow, 1967, 1993; Snow and Anderson, 1993), that is a more formidable task than one might imagine, and that is for several reasons. For one thing, "being there" does not necessarily locate one within the subjective realities of the lives of homeless people. This is particularly true with chronically homeless people. It has taken them some extended period of time to arrive at their "place" in the homeless world and for the researcher to simply be physically present in their world does not necessarily make that world visible and understandable as homeless in experiential terms.

In the second place, regardless of how "close" one gets to the realities, or to the data, what is experienced remains one's own interpretation, despite our

best efforts. It has not been my task to analyze my own experience of what it means to be a "homeless person," but to understand the horizons of meaning of those who, according to their location, are residents of the streets.

Finally, through analyzing narratives, the task that I have carved out is to analyze the text at hand, or in some sense to examine the representations of the worlds of homeless people. In this type of analysis, this is effectively unavoidable.

The interviews were conducted in the field, but not the analysis. To analyze the interviews is always a second hand task. Thus the analysis will be an analysis of the text, rather than of the reality of the interview events themselves. This does not preclude the fact that the interview texts are a reasonably clear representation of the reported experience of the persons interviewed. At least the interview as recorded or written down is sufficiently close to the empirical words of the informant to treat as real for all practical purposes. To treat "the interview" otherwise is to destroy the possibility of hearing what "the other" says and, in the process, destroy the possibility of speech.

Nevertheless, one of the assumptions that I am making is that, even though the text of the interviews have empirical referents, and in this sense refer to the empirical reality of the interview events, there is a sense in which they remain to some degree representations. This is difficult to avoid for several reasons. First, certain dialects are used that rendered many of the words I

heard effectively incomprehensible. Thus, embedded in my hearing is my understanding of those words, or in the case of other transcribers, the transcribers' understanding of those words. This results in certain words being used in the text of the interviews, creating a mediated representation of the interview text. Second, I guided the informants in telling their stories toward matters that were of interest to me. This may well mean that on some occasions the respondents framed their stories in terms of my horizons of meaning and told their stories in terms of those frames rather than narrating their stories in frames that reflected their own biographical linkages. Third, there were several times when equipment, such as tape recorders, or transcribers, for a variety of reasons, simply did not accurately reproduce the words of the respondents. In these cases, the transcribers and I simply came as close to the words of the respondents as possible. Fourth, it will be noted that many of these interviews, particularly some that were transcribed directly from tape recordings, only partially reflect the idiosyncratic nuances of the respondent, including the ah....'s, the shifts in thought, the incomplete sentences, the particular grammatical rendition of the interviews, and the tonal variations. This factor alone necessitates my dealing with the interview texts as, in part, representations rather than as naturalistic reflections of the material reality of the interview events themselves.

I have approached the text as representation for two reasons: First of all, in attempting to achieve a naturalistic perspective on the text of the interview

itself, this was required in order to attempt or approach faithfulness to that text. Second, any change, or "cleaning" of the text would inevitably reflect my own interpretive activity. For other interviewers with other respondents and in other situations, it might well be that a clear and accurate rendition of interviews might be possible. In listening to the homeless respondents' stories, it is a horse of a bit of a different color. There is no arbiter who can say that "this or that" really happened as the informant reports it in the interview. But the question is, "Is that really important?" I am making the assumption that these homeless respondents have told their stories in ways that make their lives meaningful to themselves and to their perception, or understanding, of what I, or other interviewers, would consider as meaningful.

For example, one man with whom I spoke very briefly told me that what he remembered did not supply the horizons of meaning of "home" for him, as he had no meaning of home. Rather he noted that it was what he thought about what I considered "home" that made the word "home" meaningful. However, he couldn't talk about that, since he didn't really know anything about it. I then asked him what he perceived that "home" meant to me. His response was that he didn't know exactly, but he thought that "home" to me would be a nice, safe house or apartment in which I and my family lived, and that all of this together meant "home," and that sounded pretty good to him. Thus, a completely and, self-admittedly, fictional, representation of home became the horizon of meaning to which he looked to understand the social and physical place that gave

subjective meaning to the word "home." The same can be said with descriptions of interaction, or events. It is not "the things" themselves that serve as horizons of meaning for the respondents, but the ways in which the varied experiences served as linkages to the varied vistas and events of their lives. Hence, it is their representation, and not the empirical referent of their representations that serve to link their interviews to various horizons of meaning. For at least these reasons, I am not concerned with the accuracy of empirical representations in determining the subjective meanings of these informants.

As for my own place in this project, the project is, within itself, a narrative description that furnishes me with linkages to the world of homeless people. I have been struck by my own variations of rendering the social world visible to those who have inquired into the nature of this project. There have been times when I have been empathetic with the homeless persons with whom I have been in contact. This empathy has shaped my thinking and speaking so that, as I have spoken, I have heard myself speak words of defense, of advocacy, or even appreciation. As I have listened to my words they have frequently sounded as though they were spoken by a foreigner in this social world that I inhabit. At other times, I have found myself lacking in sympathy of any kind, both in my understanding of these homeless people as I have dealt with them in their world, and in my understanding of them as I referenced them from my position in the realm of the domiciled. Or again, when a kind of sociological neutrality has prevailed, I have found myself speaking in analytic and sterile terms, wondering,

for example, about the cognitive activity that must occur within the minds of homeless people if we “could really know” what mental activity was occurring in their own minds, or worse yet, evaluating such supposed activity.

The Perspective of the Informants

As I listened to these respondents tell the stories of their lives, I found myself constantly struggling with my own sense of expertise, wanting to privilege my analysis of their lives over theirs. On several occasions, I was brought up short by their responses in which they informed me, either directly or indirectly, that they were “the experts” regarding their lives and that I was “the student.” Furthermore, several of them made it known that they were taking me, and other interviewers in this project, into account as audience, and that this influenced their telling of their stories.

One such experience was with the man I’ve named Billy Bob. In listening to his story, I was confronted with the idea that narrative or narrative analysis is not new. Not only did he theorize his life as his own, and frequently homeless life in general, but he also theorized a major part of my method! I quote him here to illustrate his theorizing of narrative construction as he compared his telling of his story to me with his understanding of telling his story at an AA meeting:

It’s really nothing new, is it? I’ve told my story hundreds of times. In AA, I’ve told my story countless times. And each time, it’s probably different. Depends on the audience. I’m a natural ham or performer, you know, and I find a real

satisfaction in telling my story, you know. Now if I's telling it to an AA group, I'd emphasize more of the really bad things that happened to me when I was drinking, and how drinking made me homeless because that's all I cared about, that's the main point in living. And I'd probably tell more about the good life when I stopped cause that's what stopping drinking has done for me. But you're not interested in this from an AA's perspective. You wanted to know about homelessness, so I told you about homelessness. Now if I was trying to get some money or somethin' from somebody, like the VA, I'd a probably made myself sound more pitiful, you know, like a victim. But I'm really not a victim. And I don't have to tell you that, cause you're not interested in hearing it. But now, don't get me wrong. The facts'd be the same, but they'd be put together a little different if I's tellin' my story to somebody else, or to an AA group, or whatever.

That Billy Bob articulated this insight should come as no surprise, nor should it come as a surprise that other people with whom we spoke theorized their lives in authoritative terms. Gubrium and Wallace (1990) noted that their elderly respondents frequently articulated sophisticated theory regarding the life course and did so in very artfully theoretic ways. This is noteworthy at this point since it indicates a major dimension of my own perspective as I approached this project. In truth, I learned that I must be student if I were to hear their perspective with clarity and integrity, and, more importantly, to form my view of, and perspective on, their lives in *their* terms.

Key Analytic Terms

Narrative Linkage

In the analysis, I will use two key analytic terms that are used as basic conceptual tools and thus need to be defined. The first of these is the term,

"narrative linkage." Following Gubrium (1993) and Holstein and Gubrium (1995), narrative linkages may be understood in either of two ways, both of which I will utilize in the analysis of these interview texts. One way to understand linkage is in an active sense where the focus is on the verb, "to link." In focusing on this sense of the word, I will be emphasizing the construction of meaning as respondents artfully weave together differing strands of experience to assemble complex clusters that, taken together, convey meaning.

The second sense in which narrative linkage may be understood is substantively, or as a noun. When used in this sense, linkage denotes an association between or among experiences that are basic units of meaning that, in the story as told, coalesce out of the narrative construction process. In this sense, narrative linkages *are* the subjective meanings conveyed in the interview texts through repeated linkages with the experiences of the respondents' life on the streets. As we examine the narrative linkages in the following interview texts, "we will be able to analyze both *what* is meant by the quality of life and *how* meaning is assembled." (Gubrium, 1993, p. 148) What respondents say about matters such as the quality of life needs to be understood in relation to the linkages. The linkages give the qualities of life subjective meaning. (Gubrium, 1993, p.9-10)

Horizons of Meaning

A second key conceptual term used in this study is "horizons of meaning." When I use this term, I will be referring to patterns, or clusters, of narrative

linkages that are formed as the respondents construct their stories, meaningfully linking together various experiences and events, both immediate and distant, into patterned relationships that, when viewed together, form what will be termed "horizons of meaning." (Gubrium, 1993, p. 9-10)

These horizons form around specific themes. For example the theme of fear emerges as various respondents biographically link to experiences that evoke feelings of fear. When we hear Henry, in Chapter 5, tell his story, the emotion of fear is a horizon of meaning he forms by biographically linking various experiences together as he views the contours of hostility and violence in his life. In these events Henry learned to fear other homeless people. As other respondents tell their stories, fear also emerges as a major theme of their lives, even though the events to which they refer vary considerably. Fear thus becomes a horizon of meaning. Other horizons are formed in a similar manner as respondents weave together varied linkages to events that have become meaningful to them.

On the other hand, as I heard these men and women tell of their own experiences, there was a social dimension in their stories as they framed the qualities of life on the streets. They told, and listened to, stories of varied experiences in ways that took for granted that these stories were not only their own, but reflected commonly shared experiences and/or meanings. These horizons, in other words, have both shared and biographically-specific aspects. Returning again to Henry and the horizon of fear as an example, fear is a shared

horizon of meaning among many of the respondents in this study, each horizon linking together homeless people who, through their own biographical linkages, participate in the construction of that horizon.

All of this is germane to the method of analysis that I am using. Central to this method is that themes, or horizons, are revealed through the analysis of linkages in various interviews. By attending to these linkages, I will show both the horizons and some of the ways in which those horizons are formed.

Finally, these linkages, and the horizons they form, also work in the other direction as the horizons of meaning become interpretive tools by which the respondents understand significant events in their lives (Goffman, 1974; Hazan, 1990). As they have referenced linkages to specific events that form a particular horizon of meaning, they also link to that horizon in order to frame other events. Gubrium and Holstein (1997) argue that

...horizons and linkages are thus mutually constitutive, reciprocally forming parts and connections into recognizable wholes. The same elements of experience can be linked together into differing configurations, taking on contrasting meanings as they coalesce in relation to distinct horizons." (p. 148)

Chapter Organization

The following chapters are organized around the main themes that presented themselves in the interview narratives and formed the horizons of meaning of their world. While some themes were, to some degree, part of all the narratives, the voices of those homeless men and women in which the themes

were most prominent are presented for detailed explication. Following a review of the literature in Chapter 2, in Chapter 3 I will discuss the themes of time as they prominently presented themselves in the narratives of two black homeless men, Angel and Cy. In Chapter 4 I will discuss some of the ways in which a variety of these people understand and construct the spatial dimensions of their social world, focusing primarily on the narrative interview texts of "Rick," "Cindy," "Shorty," "Ronald" and "George." Yet the worlds of time and space do not exist independently of each other, and consequently, in the concluding chapter, I will discuss some of the ways in which the temporal and spatial dimensions of the social world intersect.

Chapter 5 centers on a commonplace emotion of the streets--fear. Through the linkages that "Henry," "Trine," "Sadie," and the other men and women who are represented in this chapter make with their homeless experience, I show how the primacy of the emotion of fear is general to the homeless, but in the specific interview texts also becomes specific to their particular narratives.

In Chapter 6, I will demonstrate that the affiliative linkages that tie together the people with whom I have talked, when at all, are, on the surface, much the same as affiliative linkages within the domiciled world. Yet these linkages are much more ephemeral and exist for very different reasons. It will be seen, for example, that while many have families outside of the homeless world, their relationship to these families appears to be often times strained and

outside of what they consider to be "normal" family relationships. It will further be shown that while they speak of friends and family among other homeless people, the relationships to which they refer are constructed out of mutual fear, intense loneliness, and lack of permanence of place, or even more, of placelessness.

In chapter 7, following Hazan (1980), I will discuss the ways in which time and space constructions, informed by and informing emotions and affiliations, are implicated in the construction of a moral order on the streets that is outside of the moral order of the domiciled world. In this chapter, I will discuss the interrelation of the moral order of the domiciled world as seen from the perspective of homeless people, and show how this moral order is suspended because of the exigencies of life on the street, and replaced by a highly pragmatic substitute for a moral order that is summarized by the phrase, "you do what you gotta do." Within this emergent moral order, I will demonstrate that there is a kind of organizational embeddedness that occurs, resulting from horizons of meaning gleaned from the gaze of the contours of their lives, such as racial order, and how this is used to separate at least some of these people into strata in their own world.

In Chapter 8, I will summarize the analyzes of chapters three through seven, and discuss the implications of these analyzes for understanding life on the streets. Further, I will discuss the manner in which the moral order, fear, and affiliation are likewise linked to the construction of time and space, and show

that they are seen only in relationship to each other. While they may be viewed separately for analytic purposes, together, these themes form a relatively complete picture of life on the streets, linked together by a variety of horizons of meaning, each being linked to the other in ways that illustrate their interdependence.

CHAPTER 2 STUDIES OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

The phenomenon of homelessness has been the locus of interest for a broad range of social researchers (Anderson, 1923; Rossi, 1989; Rossi, Wright, Fischer, and, Willis 1987; Caton, 1990; La Gory, Ritchey and Fitzpatrick, 1991; Jencks, 1994; Williams, 1995; Snow and Anderson, 1993; Liebow, 1993; Elias and Inui, 1993). Beginning with Nels Anderson's book, The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man (1923), and continuing to the present, these studies have described homelessness from a wide variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. But the most widely utilized approach has been the statistical compilation and analysis of the prevalence and characteristics of homeless men and women. This will be my point of departure in reviewing the literature in the area.

The Homeless Population

Counting the Homeless

There is a substantial literature available regarding the enumeration of the homeless population that has been estimated to range from 300,000 to nearly 2 million. Two notable problems stand out in these figures. One is the difficulty of any enumeration of a population that is so fluid, with people

becoming homeless every day, those who are homeless finding jobs and homes, and the geographically shifting nature of the homeless population. A second problem is the difference between estimates generated by advocacy groups and estimates generated by researchers in the human sciences. This is due in part to definition, and in part to the procedures used in enumeration. Counting the numbers of homeless people is difficult under the best circumstances, and impossible at worst.

In 1982, Hombs and Snyder, who speak as advocates for the homeless, estimated the number of homeless in the United States to exceed 1.5 million. (Rossi, 1989; Jencks, 1994). In response, Rossi and others studied the number of homeless and estimated that there were between 200,000 and 350,000 in the late 1980s (Rossi, 1989; Rossi, Wright, Fischer and Willis, 1987). Basing his estimate on a survey done by the Urban Institute and the Housing and Urban Development Study conducted in 1984 (Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1984), Jencks (1994) estimates the number of homeless in 1987 to be around 350,000. Caton, in her 1990 study of homelessness in America, recounts the difficulties in enumerating the homeless population. She ultimately agrees that Rossi's estimate of 250,000 is probably as accurate as any, if that number is specified only for the adult homeless population and does not include homeless teens who do not live with their parents.

Defining Homelessness

Definitions of homelessness have been equally problematic and have varied considerably. According to Jencks (1994), Burt defined people as homeless if they fit into any one of three criteria:

- 1) They said they had no home or permanent place to live.
- 2) They said their home was a shelter; a hotel paid for with vouchers for the homeless, or a place not intended for sleeping.
- 3) They said they lived in someone else's home but did not have a regular arrangement allowing them to stay there at least five days a week.

Bahr (1968, 1970, 1973), in his studies of homelessness and disaffiliation, defined homelessness as a state of disaffiliation, where the affiliative bonds that link persons to the conventional structures of society are lacking. Rossi (1989) defines homeless persons as "those who sleep in shelters provided for homeless persons or in places, private or public, not intended as dwellings". Snow and Anderson (1993) use this as a basis but go on to argue that homelessness involves three dimensions: a residential dimension, a familial support dimension, and a role-based dignity and moral-worth dimension.

Typologies of the Homeless Population

Simply defining and counting the homeless is insufficient, however, as those who have studied this population have come to understand its heterogeneity. Bahr (1973) notes typologies that number up to fifteen different

types of tramps and bums. This same number would probably apply equally to any typology of homeless persons. Rossi (1989) distinguishes between the new homeless and the old in historical terms. These differences center around such characteristics as geography, gender, race and age. No longer are there the old skid rows that have been demolished. In more modern times he notes the presence of an increasing number of women. He further notes that homeless people today are a younger population, fewer are employed, and the majority are now black and other racial minorities. This is a shift from the past profile of the homeless population.

Perhaps Snow and Anderson (1993) have worked out the most exhaustive typology of homeless people, dividing them first of all by how long they have been on the streets, and then subdividing their typology to delineate eight different types of homeless people, based in part on length of time on the streets, and in part on lifestyle.

Causes and Consequences of Homelessness

Causes of Homelessness

One of the persistent concerns of those who have explored homelessness is, "What causes homelessness?" The answer to this question has been myriad, with many conjectures and significant contradictions. In most of the analyses, the answer has been placed within the arena of structural causation. Snow and Anderson (1993) focus on two primary structural causes of homelessness--

residential dislocation and economic dislocation. Residential dislocation is seen in the decline in the stock of low income housing and in the rise in the cost of affordable housing.

Jencks (1994) argues, among other things, that improvements in the shelter system have encouraged homelessness. He contends that shelter life has provided a route to better housing because priority is given to those who live in shelters rather than with relatives or in abusive domestic environments. Prior causes of the increase were

the elimination of involuntary commitment, the eviction of mental hospital patients who had nowhere to go, the advent of crack cocaine, increases in long-term joblessness, and political restrictions on the creation of flophouses. Among families, three factors appear to have been important: the spread of single motherhood, the erosion of welfare recipients' purchasing power, and perhaps crack. (Jencks, 1994, p. 103)

Snow and Anderson (1993) disagree with a major part of Jencks' argument in the degree to which deinstitutionalization causes homelessness. Residential dislocation, they argue, is a far more pervasive cause of homelessness than is deinstitutionalization.

Finally, Jencks (1994) says that homelessness feeds on itself. Once a person has experienced homelessness, the specter of homelessness looses its frightening power for the person who will no longer tolerate undesirable or abusive relationships and who will often choose the autonomy of the streets and shelters.

Rosenthal (1994) argues that no underlying theory of homelessness is possible due to the many paths to homelessness and we should look to the many causes that include the crisis in affordable housing, unemployment, holes in the safety net, deinstitutionalization, and changes in traditional family structures. This includes changes in mores that allow women more latitude to leave abusive relationships, permit single mother families, and that have led to significant increases in the divorce rate.

Survival Strategies of the Homeless

Another general concern of those who have studied the homeless are their survival strategies. In their article, "Survival strategies of Older Homeless Men," Cohen et al. (1989) note how older homeless men in the Bowery used informal networks and other means to develop survival strategies. These strategies related them to available resources, and to each other for support networks.

Other major research emphases found in reviewing the literature include characteristics of the homeless (Rossi, 1989), descriptions of the lives of the homeless and, in particular, the lives of homeless women (Liebow, 1993), and the lifestyles and career patterns of the homeless (Snow and Anderson, 1993).

Alcoholism

The particular problems that have been associated with homeless people range from alcoholism to problems of self definition.

Bahr (1973) notes that in post WWII, the homeless population was pictured as comprised of totally disaffiliated, alcoholic degenerates. He focuses on the incidence of alcoholism among skid row inhabitants and says that it is much lower than the public perception. Many are simply heavy drinkers who are spree, or binge drinkers because of financial condition and their consequent homeless condition. Snow and Anderson (1993) conclude a low estimate of alcoholism based on their own study. Rather, there is considerable alcohol abuse. They argue that heavy drinking is a product of life on and off the streets.

Medical Problems

Closely associated with alcohol abuse are medical problems. Drapkin (1990), for example, compiles an extensive listing of those medical problems, including various traumas, substance abuse (including significant amounts of drug abuse in addition to alcoholism), AIDS, tuberculosis, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, peripheral arterial disease, peripheral venous disease, parasitic skin infestations, and problems associated with pregnancy. An interesting footnote to this is that while AIDS is not only transmitted by sexual contact, it is well established that sexual contact is a primary means of transmission. Yet Drapkin does not deal with AIDS as a sexually transmitted disease, or with other sexually transmitted diseases. In preliminary interviews, a significant number of the homeless people with whom I have spoken have referenced their own need for treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.

Mental Illness

One of the issues that many researchers relate to homelessness is mental illness, both as cause of homelessness and as a result of deinstitutionalization (Jenks, 1994; Snow, Baker and Anderson, 1988; Wright, 1988). Not only is it a central concern as it is purported to deal with homelessness, but the conclusions that are drawn are often contradictory. The difference is nowhere seen more clearly than in a comparison of Snow and Anderson (1993) on the one hand and Jencks (1994) on the other. Jencks argues that deinstitutionalization is a major cause of the increase in homelessness, while Snow and Anderson insist, on the basis of an equally compelling argument, that it is not. On the other hand, Caton (1990) concurs with Jencks' argument, saying that deinstitutionalization has been a significant factor in the epidemiology of homelessness, but hers is more in the context of medicalizing, to some degree, much of the phenomenon of homelessness.

Affiliation

Still another issue that has concerned researchers has been the degree to which the homeless population is affiliated or disaffiliated. One of the first to explore this in depth was Bahr (1973), who suggests that the homeless are atomized and disconnected from social affiliation. Snow and Anderson (1993) counter that, while this is in part true, there are ties among the homeless that may be less pervasive and more attenuated, but nevertheless present. They

argue that homeless people are, by and large, actually linked to a fairly broad range of social structures, but ones that are different from the linkages of the domiciled.

In examining public perceptions of homeless people, Rosenthal (1994) speaks of a shift in the understanding of disaffiliation from agency to structure, understanding that disaffiliation is the result of homelessness, and not the other way around. He makes the argument that disaffiliation is a result of homelessness that makes homeless life, and any possible escape from it, more difficult. He goes on to argue that disaffiliation theorists have moved to speak of "victimization," and that alienation is a natural consequence of this same victimization.

Cohen and Sokolovsky (1983), who have done both qualitative and quantitative research on older men in the Bowery in New York, argue that while kinship ties and affiliation among the homeless are not of conventional types, nevertheless, there are strong affiliative networks among homeless older men, in which they adhere to strong norms of reciprocity.

La Gory, Ritchey and Fitzpatrick (1991) found that affiliation among the homeless is, in fact, quite significant, that over 93% have at least one person whom they can count on for social support, 79% have close friends, 71% visit at least one relative every two or three months, and that 70% receive at least one form of aid from them during the year.

Together, these studies, and in particular the more recent ones, paint a picture of homeless people in general as being affiliated, yet, by definition, marginalized to a significant degree.

The Self

One further issue that has concerned researchers of the homeless population is the fragile nature of the self. Snow and Anderson (1993) have discussed this issue extensively by demonstrating how homeless people "carve out a modicum of self-respect given their pariah-like status." Secondly, they devote a substantial portion of their 1993 work to demonstrating that, regardless of the very basic material level at which homeless people live their lives, there is a deeper level of meaning, the meaning of self, of which they are aware, and that they spend a great deal of energy attempting to "salvage." Their assumption with regard to the self, however, is problematic, for they appear to assume that "the self" is a preconstructed and objectively situated "thing" that resides within "the person." In the tradition that this present project follows, the self is the set of beliefs and perceptions regarding the self that is produced in social interaction (Mead, 1934).

Elias and Inui (1993), look at the meaning of homelessness among older men, and find that home has strong implications for the sense of self. Home (place) serves as a symbol that provides these men with a sense of continuity and flexibility that facilitates their adaptation to changing life circumstance. This

was primarily through providing temporal cognitive links between past and present. In this argument, they suggest an implied modification of self as defined by place and time in which identity and planning are both affected by not having a permanent residence, and this significantly modifies the ways in which the self is defined and supported as an autonomous self.

Attempts to Locate Homeless Persons in Time and Space

In many of the studies on homelessness, there are histories of homelessness as a social phenomenon. These studies frequently suggest that homelessness varies with time (Snow and Anderson, 1993; Caton, 1990; Bahr, 1973; Rossi, 1989). There are, however, few studies that explore the experiential meaning of time and space from the viewpoint of homeless people. For example, Snow and Anderson (1993) utilize the present tense in their writing and thus tend to freeze the homeless population in time and space.

The study by Elias and Inui (1993), provides a somewhat different perspective in that they explore the significance of "time" and "place" for homeless men who reside in homeless shelters in Seattle. By having a sense of place, even though it is a homeless shelter, these elderly men are able to link their past to their present and thereby make future plans. This is a crucial dimension in homeless men's construction and evaluation of self. More importantly, for the purposes of this study, they specifically note the significance of time and space as consequential dimensions of the lives of older homeless

men. They specifically note the intersection of the temporal and spatial dimensions in the ways that these men planned and lived their lives. Without a permanent sense of home, they argue that the taken-for-granted routines of life, their social, and economic well-being, and the aid and comfort provided by the familiar and supportive environment are fragile and ephemeral, and even with temporary shelter, in the daily round of life, a particularly notable dimension was the lack of temporality they experienced in their daily round between the streets, downtown SROs and the public shelter. Still, this study does not explicate the experiential meaning of time and space, or the construction of these dimensions, for homeless people.

Societal Responses to the Homeless

Another way of discussing spatiality is through societal responses to homelessness. Aside from advocacy positions that suggest a variety of ways to "help" the homeless, there is a general theme that is built around societal responses to the homeless that is found in at least two works. This suggests that homelessness is an issue that might well be dealt with spatially. Soja (1989), in noting the place of homelessness in a postmodern city, describes the preservation of the skid row district through a tight knit planning process. This would suggest that, failing in either philosophy, will, or resources, cities may well plan to "contain" homeless people within well defined boundaries, and keep the "domiciled safe" from their encroachment. This is the inverse in philosophy from

Suttles' (1972) discussion of Chicago as an urban space shaped in part by defended neighborhoods.

Logan and Molotch (1987), in their discussion of the city as being shaped by the conflict between exchange and use values, suggest that the homeless population is typically squeezed out of urban space and the plight of homeless people resides in their being denied the basic amenities of life. For example, there are no public toilets in downtown Atlanta because those who are pursuing the interests of exchange values are afraid that such amenities will attract "undesirables." Ft. Lauderdale, for the same purpose, has made it illegal to retrieve food from garbage cans.

The Homeless as Other

Many of the studies of homeless people were accomplished with a sympathetic eye to be sure, but homeless people, their lives and the issues of their lives, tend to be framed within the system of relevancies of the researchers and writers themselves (Rossi, 1989; Cohen et al., 1988; Caton, 1990; La Gory, et. al., 1991; Bahr, 1973;). In a word, "the homeless" are treated as "the other." By using this term, I am reflecting a current understanding of its meaning as suggesting that "the other" is different from, or perhaps even inferior to, the person who uses the term (Hopper 1993). When homeless people are treated as "other," they become primarily objects of research, with minimal emphasis on them as acting subjects who create and respond to subjective meanings, and

who theorize their own world of homelessness (Gubrium, 1993; Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Gubrium and Wallace, 1990). This, of course, is not unusual, since "the homeless" are viewed by many of the domiciled as a subculture of sorts. Hopper (1993), in an essay regarding the meaning of "home," discusses the extreme of otherness regarding the subculture of the homeless as he relates stories of the existence of thousands living in the underground of New York. In his discussion, homeless people are seen by many, including many in the media, as "molepeople." This is to speak of otherness through distancing, and identifying homeless with something evil. This is not the case in any of the research that I have seen, but it does suggest that the image of homeless people is seen by many people in the broader social setting as that of undesirables (Logan and Molotch, 1987).

Within the relevant literature, homeless people are frequently viewed as "other". Jencks (1994), for example, in analyzing secondary sources is primarily concerned with framing the numbers and the causes of homelessness in traditional categories of social science in order for the categories to be used in the establishment of social policy. The same might be said to be true of studies done by Rosenthal (1994) and Snow and Anderson (1993), although they have been among a small but growing number of researchers in the last decade who have taken an increasingly ethnographic approach to studying the lives of homeless men and women.

While this approach has provided a more varied vision of the lives of men and women who live on the streets and in public places, and while the voices of homeless people have been heard more in their own words, these scholars are still aware of themselves primarily as *researchers*. Snow and Anderson (1993) exemplify this shift in approach. They view their respondents as "friends," but they frame the typologies of homeless people, their needs and world views, in the more traditional terms of social science--as "other." Their study, which they describe as a naturalistic study, is much in the tradition of Whyte's (1955) Street Corner Society. In describing their work, Snow and Anderson (1993) describe the purpose of an ethnographic case study, as they call their work. "...Its close up naturalistic focus can put its readers in touch with the lives of others and thereby reduce the distance between "us" and "them". (p. 14) Yet this approach, by the researchers' own description, does not seek to convey the complexity of the world as experientially understood by homeless respondents, or their construction of it.

In what might be termed a quasi narrative analysis, Liebow (1993) studied the lives of homeless women and reported the results of this study in a book entitled, significantly, Tell Them Who I Am. He completed this study while volunteering in a soup kitchen and an emergency shelter for homeless women after he had been diagnosed with cancer and found that he had a limited life expectancy. In introducing this study, Liebow states that he understands himself to be "the research instrument," and that everything the women say and

everything about the women has been selected by him and filtered through his experience. Thus, there is a self-admittedly interpretive understanding of the work. Yet, as Liebow describes his approach, he wanted to become friends with the women he studied and thereby get as close to the source as possible, a characteristic of more naturalistic approaches to the study of social life. His purpose in the study was to examine and describe the lives of homeless women, their routines and patterns, as they understood them. To accomplish this, Liebow utilizes in-depth interviews with and observations of these homeless women to describe their lives, the conditions of living, their relationships, and their struggles, much of this in their own words (Liebow, 1993). However, he makes no effort to link the events of these women to horizons of meaning within the experiential realities of their lives (Gubrium, 1993). He thus tends to continue the practice of treating homeless people as objects of study, rather than as acting subjects, and they remain in this study "the other."

The two unambiguous exceptions to the approach of interpreting the meaning of homeless people in their own terms, and thus treating them as acting subjects, are found in Elias and Inui (1993) and Williams (1995). Elias and Inui note that the older homeless men in their study who are dependent on public shelters in which they are only temporarily housed do not construct their lives around long term social networks or the established social patterns of an established social group. Without those established networks, these men often times see themselves as "victims of the clock". Here, homeless men are viewed

as acting subjects, framing their lives and constructing their social realities within specific temporal and spatial dimensions.

Conscious that all people construct one another in interaction, and that people respond to each other on the basis of the meaning attributed to the other with whom we are in interaction, Williams studied the interactions of paying patrons with beggars and panhandlers. She began her study within the subway system of New York City and then as she encountered homeless people in Tuscon, Arizona. The project was designed to study homeless people as acting subjects in interaction with herself and others within her own social world. Her aim was to see how the homeless recipients to whom "paying patrons" gave or did not give money constructed Williams and other prospective donors. In her study, Williams explores the varied ways in which beggar and prospective donor alike construct one another as acting subjects in interaction. She is first of all concerned with where the beggars and homeless people see the paying patrons of the subway as living, meaning where people are located psychologically and socially, or where home is in the sense of how to get to the "selves" who will be willing to "share a dime," and how the prospective donors are constructed in such a way as to increase the likelihood of their donating to the cause. Then Williams examines the meaning of the world of work of homeless people as she examines the publication of a newspaper that is concerned about issues that are relevant to homeless people and the vending of this paper by homeless people in New York and other cities. Through this study, Williams explores the

construction of meaning in the interaction between vendor and buyer and the meaning of work to those who are homeless when given the opportunity to sell these papers and earn some kind of living.

In both of these approaches, Williams examines the constructions of "paying customers" (domiciled citizens) by homeless people, who are not simply objects of study, but acting subjects within a world in which they, both homeless people and researcher alike, are active participants in its construction. By exploring these dimensions of the social world from the perspective of homeless people, William's study moves in a new direction in which significant contours of the social world of homeless people is made visible in and through their interaction with members of the domiciled world.

CHAPTER 3 WHAT TIME YOU GOT?

It is practically a truism that a primary dimension around which life is ordered is time. Children are taught elementary understandings of the life course as they identify themselves in part by how old they are. Marriages are celebrated by anniversaries. Time is a measure of, and structures, business and domestic life by hours, days and weeks. The year has its rhythms of July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. There is practically no part of life that is not mediated by temporal ordering. It is somewhat eerie, then, to participate in the social world of chronically homeless people where these conventional orderings of time are either diminished or are absent for long periods.

As this project progressed, the first indication I had of the meaning of time for chronically homeless people was when one person asked me, "What time you got?" This question was not unusual, as it was asked fairly frequently. But on this occasion, my response was also to ask myself, "Why does he want to know? What difference does it make?" Later, I had the experience of giving a disposable camera to a man named Snuffy. I asked him to meet me at 2:00 p.m. the next afternoon so that I might retrieve the film, have it developed, and have him discuss with me the photographs he had taken. I showed up promptly at

2:00 p.m., and there was no Snuffy to be found. I waited for some 45 minutes and when he still did not appear, I left. The next week, I saw him again at a local mission and he asked me where I had been and why I had not met him as we agreed. I assured him that I had been there, only to have him assure me that he had been there, too, and that I had not. After we discussed this for a short while, I was able to piece together roughly what had happened. Snuffy kept time by observing the relative position of the sun. The previous weekend the time had changed from Eastern Standard Time to Daylight Savings time and Snuffy had never realized it, as there had been no radical modification in the relative solar position.

As I began to review my notes and interviews, I noticed a strange lack of any sense of the conventional ordering of time in the ways in which these chronically homeless people lived their lives, at least not in categories that were familiar to me. Even for those who regularly went to the missions for meals, there was only a vague sense of conventionally constructed time. This was not a novel observation. The sociological literature regarding the homeless population is sprinkled with references to time. Elias and Inui (1993) attempted to locate older homeless men in time and space and noted "the lack of temporality they experienced in their daily round as they shuffled between the streets, downtown SROs and the public shelter.

Hazan (1980) describes the construction of time by elderly participants in a day centre. With only that which was painful to look to in their past, and the future holding the further progressive deterioration of life, and ultimately death, they constructed a communal life in the present that was reflexively related to a moral order of care and concern. While I did not find in the interviews or observations this same temporal construction, I did find a similar understanding. The persons with whom I spoke rarely revealed the details of their past lives unless they were specifically asked about this. It was as if those times were either too painful, or too disjointed from the present, to have meaning for them, or for us, as they told us their stories. The exception to this was when they attempted to give some accounting of their present circumstance, either by demonstrating through the narration of their stories that they had not always lived like this, or to recount some rationale that they utilized to explain their present life situation.

In the following accounts, I consider the narrative texts of two chronically homeless men and, from these, have highlighted a range of themes centering on time on the streets, and how time in these terms informs their everyday lives.

Angel

Tom, Mark, Tiny, members of the research team, and I met Angel in a local park frequented by homeless people in the early Spring. Angel was a black male who was approximately 50 years old. He was hunchbacked and "worn" looking. His shoes were mismatched sneakers, and his clothes were

ragged, but clean. Angel had completed the ninth grade, but then quit school to go to work. At one point in the interview, Angel said that when he had quit school, there was good work with good pay for those who had strong backs, and that no education was needed. When we offered Angel a cigarette, he accepted, but was quick to let us know that he only smoked sometimes and that he didn't drink at all. Later in the interview, as Angel spoke of a former problem with alcoholism, he said that he had been relatively sober for ten years and that he had not had a drink of any kind for over eight years. As the interview continued, this time period came to be significant as it marked a major temporal ordering of his life.

Angel was originally from Louisiana. His parents were both dead, but he had a sister who still lived there. He said that he periodically went to Louisiana to visit his sister, but these times were infrequent, even though he said that she would like for him to come to live with her on a permanent basis. At the time of the interview, he had not been to see his sister in over three years. Angel had been married twice and had grown children. He was not sure where they lived, but said that he kept some indirect contact with them through his sister when he was in contact with her.

Angel first came to Florida over twenty years ago looking for work. He was young then, with a wife and two children. He divided his time between Florida, Louisiana, and Atlanta while he was working, but since he became homeless, he has spent most of his time in Florida. Most of his work history was

in road construction, working first as a common laborer, then as a heavy equipment operator. He lost several jobs because of drinking, which was also the primary problem of both of his marriages.

For over two years following his last job, Angel "rode the rails" as a hobo, without settling down. Periodically, he looked for work in Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, and Atlanta, but each search resulted in temporary work, or no work at all, and he was left unemployed and on the streets in each of these cities. Ultimately he returned to Jacksonville, still riding the rails, with the hope of finding work. Finding none, he became a permanent resident of the streets. It was on the streets that he began to learn about the missions and, over time, became relatively familiar with the different resources for homeless men in Jacksonville, as he had in a number of other cities.

Over the years, Angel spent considerable time in mission shelters, where he went in order to be around other "Christians." At times he spent nights there, but preferred to stay outside when possible because he believed that was where he could witness the best. As time went by, Angel spent more and more nights in the missions, but declined any kind of rehabilitation program. His sense was that he had little time left and that he should spend it alone in preparation for the second coming of Christ. For whatever reasons, he continued to spend time by himself, even when in the missions, but particularly when he was outside of the missions on the streets, or "in the weeds." At the time we met him, Angel continued to find sporadic work, but he had no permanent job. His sole source

of income was from periodic day labor "down at the labor pool." Due to his physical condition, he was unable to work regularly, and so relied on the resources of the missions and shelters for the things that he needed, and that he could not "find" himself.

When we first began our interview, Angel was somewhat apprehensive, not wanting to be interviewed, and even less eager to be taped. However, I left the group for a few minutes, and when I returned, Tommy had persuaded him to let us tape the interview. As I again took my seat on the ground, Tommy told me what had happened and asked if he could turn on the recorder, to which I agreed. Gradually, Angel became much more relaxed and spoke more freely.

Broad Sweeps of Passive Time

When Angel thinks of duration, he typically references broad sweeps, and he is usually consistent as he references this understanding of time. In the following passage, Angel references "all day" when he relates "all day" to the possibility of a 24-hour shelter, responding to Tommy's concerns about the proposed 24-hour shelter in Jacksonville. When he responds to Tommy, Angel constructs the meaning of a 24-hour shelter quite literally by translating it as a shelter that is for "all day." After our introductory conversation, Tommy asks Angel about the proposed 24-hour shelter. In answering, Angel compares the proposed shelter with his experience of a 24-hour shelter in Orlando, Florida.

Angel: ...in Orlando, Florida, people sit around and figure like that, a 24-hour mission...you know, I've been there and ahh...you

know...and people sit around, lay around, they don't want to...half of them don't want to do nothing. They try to get up and then they don't do nothing, everything. Stuff like that. They don't want to do nothing, but sit, you know. And then you do for them, you got to pay the state, chief... where they want to go and stuff like that.

Q: But it is a ...you sa...but it's a warehouse; a warehouse of people, ain't it; that's all it is, ain't it

Angel: No..it's alright...it's a nice place man...cause over in Orlando, Florida, they got...they got clinics, they got...they got a place, they got doctors, they got food for you to go; if you want to go; they got a place for your eyes...they got all kinds of stuff...that's a big place ... they got all kind of things for you to...to...to help the homeless, you know... if they accept it. Some of them do and some of them don't.

Q: Now Angel, you saying it hurt...how do...how would it hurt to have that?

Angel: You know...I feel ... it's not really hurt...you know the hurt cause if you get up and try to do something for yourself. Some just lay around and watch TV all day. You see what I mean?

Q: Okay?

Angel: They help them, cause they're off the streets. Paying from the State. Then ahh...in other words, they don't do nothing cause the man allow them...sit there all day, read books, watch TV.

As Angel recounts his story, he, like many chronically homeless people, relates his understanding of time in terms and phrases suggesting broad sweeps, such as "all day," "all night," and "most of the time," among other statements that play off this theme. As Angel looks back to his experience with

the 24-hour shelter in Orlando, he sees a relationship between the "24 hours" and "all day."

But it is not only to broad sweeps of time that he looks in his recounting of the temporal. He sees the 24-hour shelter in terms of activity. In this part of the interview, Angel links activity with space, and both space and activity with time. Interestingly, Angel sees those who reside at the 24 hour shelters as not wanting to do anything, or as he quantifies it, "half of them don't want to do nothing." It wasn't that they simply want to do nothing, however, but they were incapacitated or trapped. They attempted to "get up, but they tries to get up and do nothing, everything. Stuff like that. They don't want to do nothing, but sit, you know." The activities in which people engaged "all day" were similar to those of sleeping at night, or lounging around after dinner in other places, perhaps other shelters.

There is embedded in the meaning of "24 hours," or "all day," an understanding that the norms regarding the use of time are relaxed from what they might be within other temporal constructions, and the normal "oughts" have been suspended. Angel has experienced life in the shelter, and he links that experience to his understanding of the nature of shelter life in general, and a 24-hour shelter in particular. Angel tells how homeless people have become passive in relation to work. It is because of this passivity that they go to the shelter in the first place. While at the shelter they are allowed to remain passive. As Angel understands it, "they don't do nothing cause the man allow them...sit there all day, read books, watch TV."

The shelter is a resource center, providing for the necessities of life for homeless people: sleep, food, social life, clothes, dental and medical care and "all kinds of stuff." But the shelter is more than this. When Angel refers to the 24-hour shelter in Orlando as a "big place," he is referring to more than square feet, or area. The shelter that Angel recalls is all-encompassing in its response to the total life of homeless people, and this is linked to the shelter being open "all day." As Angel sees it, there is no motivation or need for those who reside at the shelter to work, or go outside to do anything. Being liberated from the necessity of work, they are free to spend their days at the shelter doing virtually nothing. Being faced with "all day" and with nothing pressing to do, they lack, even more, the motivation to "get up and do anything."

Angel understands that work is one means of utilizing time and that time is a resource for work. Homeless men may utilize their time in a variety of ways. If they have become accustomed to having all their needs provided, they tend to spend their time passively, waiting for their needs and wants to be met, with no need to work to provide for themselves. In the homeless population that centers around a 24-hour shelter, this passivity becomes normative. This passivity in part defines the inability of shelter residents to seek work or otherwise search out productive activity. While this passivity makes the existence of shelters necessary in the first place, once people have become accustomed to it, they are overpowered by and become captive to the comfort and convenience of the

shelter. From Angel's perspective, they are not proactive in the ordering of their lives, but passively await the provision of resources as they "lay around all day."

After a brief interchange that included a request for a cigarette and more discussion regarding work, the conversation turned to the ways Angel relates time and space in more specific terms. As Angel understands it, homeless people are controlled by, and shaped by, the world in ways they cannot control. This is seen in the relationship between place and resources. It is necessary, or at least helpful or compassionate, for some unnamed donor to provide for them. This includes not only space, but resources within the space. Again, this is seen by Angel's reference to "the man" allowing them to live their life watching TV, reading, or doing whatever they wanted to do. "...they have clinics, doctors, food, a place for your eyes, all kinds of stuff, all kinds of things for you to...to...to help the homeless." The key to receiving these services was to passively accept them, which some homeless people then do, and some do not. This suggests that in many instances there is little more to agency than to fail to reject, or simply to show up at the right time and the right place in order to receive what is passed out. Their relationship to time, then, is passive, and drawn in broad strokes. Life just "happens" to them.

Satan's Time vs. God's Time

Consistently, Angel fails to see himself as a part of the same world as other homeless men, who often failed to look to the past or to the future. That

difference could be seen in many dimensions, but the primary dimension was a different ordering of broad sweeps of time, and that was done in epochal terms. Angel saw life as being connected in what at first appeared to be mundane categories of time: into the tenses of past, present, and future. This was not tense as normally understood, however. Angel constructed tense in terms of a theological frame that he brought to his understanding of time. He returned to the dimensions of past, present, and future frequently during the conversation, as in the following segment.

Angel: Satan...you know..Satan destroying the world. One day bitterness, you saw self-discover; this hate comes; you saw all this ole stuff.. it come from the devil man...without Satan, there be nothing...it'll be a ...it'll be a perfect world like God intended for it to be. But...but...it's in the word ...it's indicated...it's the truth...this ain't no phony; it ain't no fun kill, the word of God's will..

Q: You spend a lot of time reading it?

Angel: Yes Sirrrr...and I...and I... I'm born again. I remember the first time when I was drinking...I was drinking beer...I was never on drugs; I use to drank beer. And man when I...when I ...my...Satan pulled me...I mean the Lord pulled me up on my knees one day in my Mother's house. I...I...I was...I ain't know..I ain't know it then. I got to drinking beer; I ain't paid it no attention, cause it were good. Cause I wanted to...seem like ..seem like I came to the Lord, He brought all that back to my attention...what..what..back there in the world...He took care of me when I was out there in the world.

The distant past for Angel was comprised of the "good times" in the world. These were brought to a close with his becoming Satan's victim. The past was, for him, then, a time in which Satan ruled. The future is God's time. It is a time

over which God rules. And the present time is a time of struggle between God and Satan. As we listened more closely to Angel, however, the present time is more of the imperfect tense. An action was begun at his mother's home, when the Lord "pulled me up on my knees one day in my Mother's house." The day was clearly a turning point in his memory. This day marks a line of demarcation between the past and the imperfect present. He links that day with his experience of being born again, and being born again has been at least indirectly related to his belief that God has taken care of him in the present, which, in the interview, he reconstructs to be the span of years between the time when he was born again and the future time when God will deliver him from this present world.

While Angel waits for God's future, he is not idle. During the hard times that he has endured, he spends his time reading the Bible and going to church. This is his means of accomplishing two things: withstanding the works of Satan, such as bitterness and hate, and secondly, it is a means of "remembering" the future, thereby extending it back into the present where he can connect with it. Through these means, he links past, present, and future into a coherent history that accounts for his present circumstance of homelessness. The source of his knowledge is his Bible, which he pulled from his book bag at one point in the conversation. The Bible was well worn, with pages "dog-eared," yellowed, and torn in places from constant use.

Linkages of Time with Drugs and Work

Within Angel's temporal order, he referenced a sense of priorities. It was clear to us that Angel had a clear perspective on the role drugs and/or alcohol play in the battle between God and Satan, and this perspective is unwavering. For most of the people he has known, drugs are the central fact in their life, and one of the principle anchors to which time is moored. Very shortly after, Mark, at one point in the conversation with Angel, inquired into the relationship between joblessness and homelessness, helping Angel to make the connection between the two. Angel's answer came in terms of time sequencing and this sequencing, displays the way in which he perceives drugs to be the organizing factor of time for many of the homeless men.

Angel: If you create more jobs..another thing, you can't hardly get ...a lot of stuff is stopping people from getting jobs man...cause a lot fo them on drugs. Can't get no job now, without a drug test, that'll stop you too. you understand. If you lie to get you off the streets, man, you...if you're on drugs and stuff like that, you go to...you got to first take care of your pride. You understand. How you going to ...how you're going to get ahead...a judge ain't going to let you keep it..

Q: Most of the people out here on drugs...

Angel: Yeah...most of them on drugs; alcohol. I'm just...I'm just unemployed myself...like I just said, I used to drink beer. And that was ten years ago when God took the taste out of my mouth. He let me go...that's the thing...homeless...

Q: I never thought about that at first, why people can't get jobs and even if there's jobs out there, they can't get them cause they're on drugs.

Angel: On drugs...

Q: I know there's...

Angel: Drugs don't want you to work, man...a lot of them on drugs...yeah...sleep all day.

When Angel speaks again of "all day" he is referencing the primacy of drugs in the life of many homeless people. Angel constructs drugs as not wanting men to work, as if they constitute a cosmic force that itself formulates their time. Drugs are a force within themselves with which to contend. They take on a life of their own and are personified. More than that, however, Angel sees that drugs and alcohol are a powerful force that can only be overcome by the power of God, another cosmic force, who can take the taste for them out of one's mouth. Thus, drugs become two things: first they become a force that contributes to the jobless situation, as they are incompatible with work, and second, they "cause" one to be lazy. Angel sees himself as "just unemployed," and this is a part of the bad times from which God will deliver him just as he has delivered him from the taste for alcohol.

Sequence

Drugs, however, do not simply displace the ability to work. In some instances, they not only fail to displace the desire, but there are ways in which they actually make people want to work, yet on a different temporal basis. Angel elaborates this as the conversation continues. He sees drugs as making people do things on a cyclical basis, and one almost has the sense that he sees drugs as taking away any vision of the future, God's or otherwise. People on drugs

really don't want to work, as they are controlled by their desire for "a hit," but they are willing to work for short periods in order to buy a hit. After the hit, they want to "lay around all day," by which Angel means that they can't work. And so it goes as the conversation continues.

Q: You think most people out here want to work?

Angel: Huh?

Q: Most people out here...most of the, they want to work?

Angel: Well, a lot of them want to work..just...work through the day so they ...they go to the labor Pool to get some money so they can buy a hit. They don't want to work...

Q: Wake up and the same thing tomorrow.

Angel: Uh Huh.

Q: Then wake up and do the same thing tomorrow?

Angel: Do the same thing tomorrow...They don't want to work. I don't have to have no woman with a job, cause I have to pay her every week; every two weeks. You see what I'm saying...they going to wake up do the same thing tomorrow...sure will...

In response to our question regarding the desire for work on the part of the homeless people whom Angel knew, he sees other homeless men as doing the same thing cyclically. Work is done at the labor pool to support drug usage. Time is translated into the amount of time needed in order to earn enough money to buy a hit, and is constructed around drug usage. He sees life as cyclical in that it's repetitive. "Work all day" so that they can get a hit, get high, get some sleep and then start the same kind of day all over again. At the same

time, although Angel says that he is not on drugs or alcohol, he nevertheless sees his own time as a cycle, and a woman would get in the way—interrupt his cycle. He realizes the connection between his time cycle and the demands a woman would place on him. He identifies with the other homeless men he knows, and also with their time construction. As time is built around drug usage, for example, a woman and her needs, or demands, would bring about an alternative temporal construction that would conflict with the basic rationale behind his projection of time as cyclical. Also, the cycle is caused by the need, or desire, to do drugs. The work pattern is shaped by temporal constraints, and time is constructed to maintain the rhythm of regular drug usage. As drug usage is cyclical in nature, so the time around which it is constructed is cyclical.

Light and Dark as Indicators of Time

As we probed for, and listened to more specific temporal descriptions, we heard Angel order time in two more ways. First, there is light and dark, and second, time is ordered around the time at which the soup line forms at the mission or shelter, time being socially organized, as it is for most persons.

Q: **What...what...you don't have a watch...how do you tell time...**

Angel: **I tell time...that ain't got nothing to do with on the road, but [chuckles] but, you know, I walk down the road and I see the time...you know. The only time I want the time you understand, is out here you got to eat...somebody, all the homeless, go...go and find something to eat. You understand...you go down to the mission...see...you go down...what time...what time you go to the soup line, and then**

you want me to [unintelligible]...you know...that ain't got nothing to do with it...you don't worry about it...you know.

Q: So how you know when to go to bed at night? Huh?

Angel: When it get dark, I go to bed...

Q: Find you somewhere to sleep...[chuckles] and when it gets light, you wake up...

Angel: Wake up...I like to get up man before...before it get light...I get up like five...you know...I don't like nobody standing around me...you know...I don't like nobody...you know...I just like to get up and get out of the way. I don't like to hang around too long..I like to get up...get up early.

Significantly, Angel states overtly that time, as he perceives that we understand it, is irrelevant. His ways of knowing time are different from those of the domiciled. Speaking of conventional time, he says "That ain't got nothin' to do with on the road." Angel's world, the rhythms and patterns of his life, are set to a different cadence, one that is lived in different dimensions, and according to different needs and contingencies. When dark comes, he goes to bed and when it becomes light, or dawn approaches, he gets up, making temporal meaning accordingly.

There is also an anti-affiliative attitude embedded in Angel's understanding of time. Darkness is alone time. He finds a place to sleep that is apart from others. He associates light with others, but in a negative way. He dislikes being visible to anyone while sleeping or, as he says, "I don't like nobody standing around me." His understanding of others, homeless or domiciled, and his affiliative attitude toward them, shapes his sense of time.

Sleep is alone time, and he awakes early to get out of the way--of others, lest they do him harm while he sleeps.

Yet Angel has another means of understanding time. He "sees" the time that is relevant to him. What he sees is groups of other homeless men going to the shelters to get in line to eat. In this sense, time is formed by events and is event-driven. In some ways, Angel watches the movement of homeless men just as those in domiciled society watch the movements of the hands of a clock. When they move, he knows that it is time to go to the soup line.

Mission Time

Angel also describes time as a commodity to be budgeted and spent, as he references "mission time." Mission time is a term commonly used among the homeless men who spend some of their nights in the shelters. Although the time varies, each person is allotted a specific number of nights per month that they are allowed to spend in the shelter. Angel is keenly aware of his amount of allotted mission time, and realizes that when that time is expended, he stays out in the public spaces. This becomes apparent when Mark asks him,

Q: So...do you stay down here in the park much?

Angel: The only reason I've been staying down at the ahhh...you know, I've..I've been in the mission right now. Off and on, my days is about to run out now. I'm bout...you know... my days is out and I've been looking for a place to sleep tonight...you know. Yeah...

Q: Well, when you don't stay in the mission, where'd you stay?

Angel: Anywhere I could find me a place; sometimes when I work, I...you know...I stay in a hotel you know... until I run out of money. Cause I stay in a hotel ... at least I... when you stay in a hotel, you can be where you can sleep good and get some rest."

Q: Yeah

Angel: And so...I had money...a lot of times I had money a lot of times to get me a place to live permanent, but I ain't got a job to keep it. You understand...so, I don't worry about it. I can't find a place until I have a permanent job. It's like that.

In this part of the narrative, mission time is a spendable commodity. It is something that can be spent and that "runs out," like money. It is measurable in terms of days per month. It is an entitlement that they have been given. One can utilize mission time without long term, or future, commitments to an environment that "controls them." This would be the case if they "got into the program," that encompasses the future. When they're out of mission time, they stay in the park, or other public places. These places, however, do not give them the stability, safety, or comfort of "place" or social location, that is theirs.

When Angel speaks of permanence, he is speaking of time in quasi-permanent lodging, such as boarding houses, or motel or hotel accommodations, for which he pays with excess funds generated from the labor pool, or from funds that have been provided through public assistance, and time spent in these accommodations will last until his money runs out. Although this is a rare luxury, these times are important to Angel, even though they last only briefly. Clearly, permanence does not mean for Angel what it means for the

more typical domiciled person. In a sense, permanence for which one pays might be compared to what he says about home in another part of the interview. Home provides a fixed social/geographical location, a "place", and homelessness becomes placelessness; shelters become temporary, a socio-geographical location constantly in flux that includes or excludes other homeless men, and may include (with the expenditure of mission time) or exclude (when mission time has been exhausted) Angel himself. Even more temporary is the "place for the night," or the time one spends with another homeless person in a public place. So, Angel moves from "less temporary" to "more temporary" over time as his mission time is expended, or as he has the resources by which to pay for lodging for a short time.

Distant Places and Time

When Angel speaks of his family he references distant horizons, meaning that they are not present in his immediate range of referents. Angel notes the presence of a sister in Louisiana with whom he could stay "anytime" he wanted. He even goes so far as to reference this as home, suggesting that home is another place and another time, or another world.

Generally, Angel relates any production of time in broad strokes, but he is aware of sequencing. As he shifts the conversation to his family, there is embedded in his talk a sense of sequence around which the story turns. When he is "in" Jacksonville, which he references by the use of the word "in," he

frequently has no place to stay. The same is true of Atlanta or Ft. Lauderdale. His sojourns in these places are, however, frequently followed by a stay at his family's home in Louisiana. So, he goes from a place to where he is homeless to his family's home, and then, when he tires of "them taking care of" him he leaves. In this there is a certain rhythm, a cyclical pattern, that he follows. However, the cyclical pattern is shaped by this sequencing.

Angel: Well, I done been in...I've been in more than I've been out. You know, when I get somewhere to stay I just...I go home and I stay awhile and then I stay with my family awhile and I get tired of them taking care of me so I say, you, I tell you what...I'll get up and leave...you know...

Q: Your family live around the area

Angel: No, my family in Louisiana. From Louisiana...

Q: Oh, really...

Angel: Yeah... Louisiana

This sense of sequencing is not rigid or totally predictable in his story. As we listened to Angel talk about the ability to go home "anytime," Mark reintroduces the question of family again, and Angel elaborates more clearly his meaning of "family."

Q: You got any family you stay with...

Angel: I got a sister I can go stay with now...they didn't want me to come up here. I can go home anytime I want to. Anytime I want a place...

Q: Where does your sister live?

Angel: In ahhh ... Louisiana...

As Angel tells us his story, he speaks of other problems that he has in living with his sister, but the primary conflict concerns the way in which he spends his time, and this problem has evolved from the sister "taking care of him." When he "gets tired of" her care-taking, it is a signal for him to resume his wandering. However, at any point at which he tires of taking care of himself, the weariness is a signal for him to go home. In both cases, his movement through the somewhat predictable sequence is triggered by his dissatisfaction with whatever his present state or condition is. To stay "awhile" is to stay until his reaction to the stay overwhelms him. In this sense, Angel constructs time, not by any period, or unit of measurement, but by his own adaptation to, or weariness with, the particular environment.

Hard Times

In another way, Angel's gaze on distant horizons is directly connected to the quality of his life on the streets in terms of present time. As his gaze moves from the distant past with his answer to Mark's question as to why he left Louisiana, to the recent past, he links recent past to distant past through economic opportunity. The array of economic opportunities in the distant past contrasts with the lack of opportunity in the recent past. When compared to the distant past, which, from an economic point of view he sees as good times, he sees the recent past as hard times.

Q: What made you leave Louisiana?

Angel: Homeless: Well, you know..with all that...it ain't worth it you know...and all...I use to go...well, I use to...cause I use to come down to Florida twenty something years...

Q: Really?

Angel: But you know why...cause we got married when we were young; good money made; good job...everywhere you went, you found a good job. Made good money...it wasn't like it is now, man. Cause it's hard time...

As I listened to Angel talk about hard times, I heard him characterize them by the qualities of life that were no longer present, but that were present in the former times. He speaks of marriage as a young man, and marriage no longer seems to be a possibility as the years have worn on. In the past there were good jobs that were attractive, and good pay, which was commensurate with the job. Thus, good times for Angel have been characterized by intimacy, a sense of joy, a feeling of being valued, and adequate financial resources. When he looks back to the days of twenty years ago, those days were not like the present, for the present is "hard time."

God's Time

As the conversation continued, Mark turns the topic to ways in which Angel spends his time, asking about the variety of activities in which he is engaged.

Q: Angel, do you hang in the same kind of places most of the time...do you...

Angel: Like what?

- Q: Well, like do you stay right in the same general areas downtown, do you...
- Angel: Yeah, I go...you know, I go downtown and walk around; I get tired of sitting around, I walk around...it get hot, I find a cool spot. Like that..
- Q: Wh...what kind of ... what kind of places do you see downtown. What kind of things do you..wh...you go down and sit at the Landing, where do you go?
- Angel: Well, I can't stay in that park cause I don't like the...I can't stand the odor, you know...the birds and stuff round there...
- Q: Yeah...
- Angel: I mostly go down here on ahh right by where the city...you know where the lake at, you know where that big ole lake at...not the Landing, but the walk...I be down here on the bank...
- Q: Board Walk
- Angel: Yeah, I don't go to the River Walk, but ahh...I go by the City Garage...over there and sit down...
- Q: Yeah...
- Angel: Yeah, I go over there and sit down...you know, read the Bible, I love to read about God and stuff like that.
- Q: What is pretty important to you...you go to church?
- Angel: I just came from church...I figure like this, you know...I know...I know one day God will deliver me...I done had a lot of backslides you know, and I walked out of them. I'm being delivered out of this mess you know. God got me here for a purpose, you know...when I... when his time come, I'm ...He's going to pick me up out of here...when ahh...in....in God's time, I'm gonna be picked up and delivered out of all of this.

After the interview was over, all three of us shared the same perception that Angel was “enduring” his homeless condition by waiting for the future, or “God’s time.” The future time toward which he fixed his gaze was one not of his making but of God’s. And that future time recasts his present condition in frames that are both tolerable and comprehensible. In the meantime, the best he can do is to make himself comfortable. When the heat becomes too overpowering, he tries to find a cool spot. When it becomes too cold, he tries to find warmth. Like his time spent with his family, there is no place that is ultimately his home. His life is one of waiting, and reacting, and coping---coping as best he can until God delivers him. In order to do this, Angel fills his time as much as possible with reading the Bible and going to church, making vivid those often distant horizons and strengthening his linkages to them.

Homelessness Will Always Be With Us

As Angel experiences his life and the lives of other homeless men over time, he does so according to his temporal paradigm of past, imperfect present, and God’s future. The imperfect present retains its future orientation, which is to continue his preparation until God intervenes and that future arrives.

Angel: All of this is going to be a ...all this is going to be a ... all this homeless stuff they ain’t going to never come to an end. You going to have to let it stay in the world. It was there at the beginning of the world, it’s going to be there at the end of the world. It’s all..it’s going to bring us to God to help you to..you..you won’t be one of them put to death. You understand...But you ain’t going to never stop this now. You

ain't going to stop...always will be homeless people. Always will be homeless...

For Angel, any future from the perspective of homelessness is bleak. There will always be poverty and homelessness, if for no other reason than because it has always been there, perhaps during the reign of Satan's time, and there's no reason for it to end during this time when death and other forms of trials and tribulations predominate. During this time, there "always will be homeless...." Homelessness for Angel is a primary condition of humankind that will be present until the end, and is an instrumentality that ultimately will "bring us to God."

Cy

Cy is a black man, approximately 46 years old. He left school when he was in the twelfth grade. When he was 18, he enlisted, or was drafted, into the army. It was not clear to me from my conversations with him which was the case. Mark and I interviewed him at one of the local missions.

Cy is known to other homeless people as a "drug head." The designation seems to imply more than "drug addict." It also suggests someone who is perceived as having been made mentally ill by the use of drugs. He has some history of treatment for drugs and mental illness, but that has been sporadic. From his own report, which was in some measure confirmed by others at the particular mission where he was interviewed, Cy spends more time off drugs now than under their influence.

Cy is originally from Jacksonville. It is not clear how much of his family lives in town, as he is somewhat reluctant to talk about family, other than his sister. He spends some of his time with his sister, but is often prohibited from staying there. Most of the time, when he doesn't stay with his sister, he spends the nights in the missions, and has hopes of living, at least for the short term, at the new shelter for homeless people.

At the time of this interview, Cy had been out of favor with his sister for "a couple of weeks," and had only been given new mission time within the last two days as it was the second day of the month. In the interim, he had been living down by the railroad tracks approximately two miles away from the mission. After the interview was over, I drove him to his "place in the weeds," his alternative sleeping space, so that he could look for a cigarette lighter he had lost. The spot in which he had stayed was approximately fifty yards from the railroad tracks on the side of a small embankment. It was relatively protected by trees and shrubs, and was not visible to anyone who was not looking for it. The only evidence of human habitation was a somewhat worn piece of mattress box, very ragged pieces of what had been a blanket, an old shoe, and several beer cans. Possibly twenty to thirty yards away was a lean-to shelter, built from scrap material. Cy pointed this out, calling it a tent, and said that beyond that were other "tents" that constituted a "hobo camp." The hobo camp was uninhabited during the daytime. Cy's place was hidden from the view of those who lived in the hobo camp, but he feared that if anybody ever found out what a good place

he had, they would come and take it over. He said that he had maintained this particular spot for about a month. As we drove back to the mission, we drove by his sister's house, which was a small and simple, but clean, single family dwelling with a front porch. Cy said that he frequently slept on this porch when he came over and it was too late to knock on the door.

In terms of work, Cy has found day labor periodically through the labor pool. He had been assigned to truck repair in the army, and had worked as an automobile mechanic after his discharge. As he states, he worked in several different places until 1988, when he left his job, his house, and the lady with whom he was living. Since 1988, his primary work off and on has been low skilled work for only a few days at a time.

When talking with him, it is difficult to "read" what he says, as Cy seldomly, if ever, looks others in the eye. He is generally a very quiet person and has little to do with others aside from the minimal contact that is necessary to survive in the world of homeless missions.

Sometimes

Immediately after the interview began, Mark asked Cy about his usual sleeping accommodations.

Q: Is this where you usually stay?

Cy: No I sleep outside most of the time, sometimes my sister lets me in a few nights I sleep outside till the end of the week. My sister will let me a few days at her house. Sometimes I sleep on the front porch of my sister's house.

As Cy tells the story of his life in response to our questions, he regularly uses the term, "sometimes" in speaking of time spent with his sister. This is a way he speaks of specific events that he interjects into his story, but are outside of the range of normal for his life, and definitely not the usual fare. When Cy speaks of "sometimes" he references a life that has a kind of randomness to it, thus constructing time as other homeless men do, linking biographical particulars with the indefiniteness of time on the streets. There is in Cy's life, however, unlike that of Angel's, a sense of not knowing, as for example when he references the times spent with his sister. These times are referenced as "a few days," or "a few nights." These events are more temporally bounded, and stand in contradistinction to the usual circumstances of his life. They suggest limits as to how long he can stay, almost as parentheses to the normal flow of his life.

And yet, there is more to his temporally descriptive style. With the advent of "sometimes," how long he is allowed to stay is not his choice. He is told he can stay, but only allowed a few days or nights. His leaving has no connection to any concern for his family, but rather to limits that have been placed for him.

Most of the time

Cy continues speaking of his life as a homeless man. As he continues, he speaks of his life apart from his sister's house. Here, he references this as "most of the time." This is a baseline for what life is like. His conversation turns

to friends and family relationships and his normal sleeping accommodation in response to a question from Mark.

Q: When you say you sleep outside, do you sleep like under a bench, in an alleyway?

Cy: By the railroad tracks in the trees. On the other end of town where they building the new bridge, is a railroad track by St. Johns river and Myrtle Ave. That way in the back of the bank.

Q: When you go back and sleep back there, are you the only person sleeping back there or do you have friends or people you know that sleep there too.

Cy: I don't have any friends back there. Some of those people has tents. I have a blanket and use cardboard sometimes. They done build tents and stay back there regular. I try to come most of the time to the mission and get my food. If I go work the labor pool, I don't go too often to the labor pool, then I can use some of that money to buy food. Most of the time I get most of my food from the mission.

Q: You say you stay in touch with your sister, so she lives around this area?

Cy: Yes, pretty close to Myrtle Ave and Beaver.

Q: And a couple nights a week she lets you stay with her? Does any of your other family live around this area?

Cy: No.

Q: Do you feel like you have a lot of friends in the same situation as you or do you make friends with the guys around here?

Cy: Most of the time, I'm at the mission. Most of the people I know are complete strangers to me and then we become friends.

In speaking of "most of the time," Cy refers to what, for him, is normal.

Most of the time, Cy stays at one of the missions or shelters. When this is not

available to him, "most of the time" is also filled by his stays in the "weeds."

"Some of the time," Cy stays with his sister. In this way, Cy recalls time as "most of the time," and "some of the time."

Killing Time

As Cy continues responding to questions by Mark, he begins to speak of time in a different tone, with time being portrayed in adversarial overtones, as he thinks about "most of the time." Cy continues to depict "most of the time" as an unhappy state, thus linking his sense of time to his degraded circumstances. It is in this context that he attempts to gain some control over this unpleasantness by altering "most of the time" with certain activities that he also does "some of the time." The conversation shifts to "recreational activities, of which Cy has few, but these he references as "killing time."

Q: I know you consider them your friends. I know you don't have much leisure time, but I mean, what do you do just for fun? Do you have fun?

Cy: Well I go for walks and then I go to the Landing every now and then, and watch the boats on the river. Just to kill time and make the time pass by in the daytime. Sometimes I go to the library and sit down and read books and then downtown to the park to kill time and then if I have any mission time, I go into the mission. If I don't I just continue finding things to do or sleep. Sometimes I sleep in the daytime or go to a place by the river in the trees and go to sleep to kill time. But I get my food from the mission. When I don't have time, I don't come to stay, just to eat only.

Cy views time as something negative, or "to be killed." It is vacuous, a barren temporal landscape, destructive in it's own right. Its own barrenness

stands as a bleak reminder to Cy of meaninglessness. In this part of the interview, Cy catalogs the things he does in order to "kill time." These include going for walks, going to the Landing (a mini-shopping center along the river) to watch the boats, going to the library to "read books." etc. The mission, however, remains an anchor for him. Even when he has no "mission time" left, he goes there to eat. In this sense, time for Cy is adversarial, the source of invisible, yet intolerable conditions of living, .

Mission Time

A short time later in the conversation, Mark turns to the question of mission time, asking what "mission time" means.

Q: When you said you had mission time, what did you mean by that?

Cy: Well they give you seven days a month, nights. I am using those seven days now. I have two more days left and then the mission time will be out. Then I either spend time or try to find a, another mission. I just don't have more time so I try to get a meal in the evening time.

Q: When you are totally out of time, that's when you go to your sister's?

Cy: Dat's right.

Cy and Angel, and other homeless people who periodically sleep at the mission, frequently use the term, "mission time." Despite differing biographical linkages to time in general, many of the homeless people are keenly aware of mission time, its availability, how much has been used, when it is renewed

monthly, and its value compared to life on the streets, even though they may have contrasting constructions of time, as do Angel and Cy. Mission time is the number of nights homeless people are allowed to spend in the missions per month. In order to have access to this time, a person has to be at the mission by 4:30 and stand in line, waiting his or her turn to sign up, and then the people at the front desk check with the police to determine whether or not they have a police record that includes certain violations, or are presently wanted for any violations of the law. After being assigned a space for the night, they go inside for the evening meal, which is open to all regardless of whether they are sleeping there that night. After the evening meal, they are required to attend the church service. Despite hearing many who work with, or advocate for the homeless, complain of required church attendance, I rarely heard homeless people themselves complain about it.

It becomes apparent in later sections of his story that Cy's time spent at the missions is a respite from the "bad times of life in the weeds." Cy, with the more passive construction of time of which Angel spoke, looks toward staying at the new 24-hour shelter. Angel, on the other hand, is more at home in the missions, and views them in more positive terms. The time he spends at the mission is, in part, time spent in preparation for his future. He views mission time in positive terms, as he is around other people of faith. But he also views time spent at the missions as preparation and renewal time for life on the streets

where he witnesses and contends with the elements and with fear as a part of his preparation for life in God's future.

When Cy has expended his mission time at all of the missions, his sister's house is a fall back place. He says that he doesn't ask her for too much, but suggests that what he does ask of her is in someway connected to her meeting her own financial obligations.

Cy: **Yes, I don't hardly ask her for too much and sometimes she pays bills all the time and cares for children all day, sometimes I can get a meal there. Most of the time, I cannot.**

Again, Cy uses the term "sometimes" as a parenthetical notation that time spent at his sister's house is something that is not normal in his life, and he references this by saying "sometimes I can get a meal there. Most of the time, I cannot." Taken in the context of the larger picture of his life, this is clearly out of the ordinary. Thus, while he has family, family is not his primary association. His primary association is that of the mission or the streets, like those whom he knows there and "on the road," and is integral to the ways in which he spends "most of his time." Most of the time he's out on the street.

The Dollar Value of Time

After talking more about the brevity of time spent with his sister, Cy's responses turn again to the idea of his own place, which he says that he will never have. Mark reiterates the question:

Q: **You don't think you'll ever have a place of your own? How come?**

- Cy: Nope. Well, I got this thing, it got me in a predicament where I can't come up with the income and its hard to find jobs and the labor pool work is not enough. The money they pay is just enough to get a meal according to how you stretch it. There are not too many jobs here in Jacksonville. It's hard to find a job.
- Q: Do you go over there?
- Cy: Maybe once a week cause the work they have is too hard. You be lifting heavy steel and sod. Heavy lifting all the time. I don't work there too much cause it's to much straining and lifting.
- Q: How long does a job last at the labor pool? Is it just a one day thing or do they give you a job where you show up for two or three days?
- Cy: Just a one day thing. Mostly you get 8 hours of work, sometimes you get 4. Most of the time it's 8. It's not enough for pay. You get paid... 25 dollars after they take out... that's not enough. Sometimes it's less than that.
- Q: For 8 hrs of work, you only get 25 bucks?
- Cy: When they take out, it be 25, that's about how much you take in. Sometime it be 27 and they work you so hard you too tired to go back the next day.

Now Cy reflects on the probability that he will never have his own home and he links that probability to the types of jobs that are available to him. As he reflects on the available work, he sees that work in terms of poorly paying jobs. He perceives that these jobs are primarily available through the labor pool. Not surprisingly, Cy equates eight hours of work with a low dollar value, as he equates an exchange of labor and time for money.

As Cy talks, he shifts from one theme to another as his gaze falls on different events to which he links his present experience. This occurs again as he shifts his focus to reasons he cannot, or is unwilling to, work: it is not merely a matter of time, but also his perception of the available work involving heavy lifting "all the time." Cy defines available work as "too hard." In the conversation, he speaks of large expenditures of energy, explaining that the work available requires him to spend more energy in one day than he can afford if he is to work the next day. Then he moves on to explain that the work available to him is not worth his time, as it is too heavy. In his explanation, Cy makes a direct linkage of work to dollars. The exchange is not balanced. There is not enough pay for the work, or the time, involved. Even for the man who is out of work, there is a sense of the value of his labor. Because he cannot, or will not, do the work, Cy has no way to earn an income, and hence no way to plan for a future. In this portion of his story, he links the value of his time in terms of his own labor to the possibility of no future.

We listened to Cy relate his difficulty of finding work that pays sufficient wages to finding permanent housing. As he reflects on Cy's story, Mark returns the conversation to alternative forms of shelter, or home, and he encourages Cy to consider his sister's home as a possibility.

Q: **It's really that hard? When you go to your sisters, you don't consider that your home?**

Cy: **When I go there, its the last resort. When there is no way I can get food, or if I am not feeling well, then I head that direction**

for a little while, and then I leave after one or two days. Then I come back to the mission and try to get a meal or what kind of help I need.

Q: You mentioned about getting sick? How do you get better? Do you tough it out or do you have some form of medical care?

Cy: Well I have been very lucky. Most of the time I start feeling sick...most of the time it's been in the winter time when I feeling bad. They have people, doctors down at the mission who would give you medicine for whatever.... my blood pressure was high and then all of sudden I came to the mission at the right time to get high blood pressure pills. You know the kind of things for pain like aspirin.

During this segment of the conversation, another twist in Cy's construction of time appears. He does not operate on a time line, but constructs his life around triggers. Only infrequently does he operate on the basis of time as constructed by clocks and calendars. Rather, when one event occurs, the event signals "time" for the next event. He does not go to his sister's house on any schedule, but, "as a last resort," he "heads in that direction for "a little while" when he can't get food, or is not feeling well. And when he goes to his sister's house, he stays, but leaves "after one or two days," when his relationship with his sister deteriorates. He does not utilize the mission clinic on any regular basis, but when his discomfort or sick feelings trigger it, he goes for medical treatment.

There is a correlation, however, between winter time and his utilization of the mission. Winter time is a time of feeling badly. He does not feel badly only in winter, but most of the time it is winter when he feels badly, and then he goes

to the mission. At times he goes to the mission "at the right time," the right time being when his physical condition warrants the medical resources of the mission, such as a doctor with blood pressure medicine. From Cy's comments, there is no indication that this timing is divinely ordained, or mystically connected in any way, as it is with Angel. Nor is it an act of fate. His words, when taken at face value, indicate that the "right time" is nothing more nor less than resources that are appropriate to his condition.

There are times, however, when Cy builds his life around a more conventional understanding of time. As the conversation continues in response to Mark's next question, Cy speaks of a past history of regular trips to the blood bank that occurred on certain days of the week.

Q: **You mentioned going to the labor pool once a week, is there any other way you support yourself? I know some people come through in vans trying to get groups of people together to work. Is there any other means of support you have other than the labor pool?**

Cy: **I was going to the blood bank regularly and needles going in my veins. They hurts real bad. I decided to let the money go. I usually go to the blood bank on Bay street to get money that way, on Wednesdays and Fridays but recently I stopped on account of too much pain.**

In a loose sense, Cy speaks of an awareness of conventional time as he remembers planning trips to the blood bank on a twice per week schedule, Wednesdays and Fridays to be specific. However, his trips to the blood bank were themselves triggered in a sense. The trigger was a need for funds but this was a regularly occurring need that prompted the temporal benchmarks of days

of the week. Then Cy notes specifically the pain that he experienced, but this time the experience of pain was a trigger for the cessation of his trips to the blood bank. When Cy speaks of things that trigger his actions, he speaks of powerful forces that prompt his need for minimal comfort or survival.

Turning Points

There is another way in which Cy comprehends time, and that is around turning points. In the following section, Cy tells of his keen awareness of the elapsed time since 1988, the year in which he left the domiciled life and went to the streets. Mark, as he noted later in a debriefing, asked Cy

Q: How did you come to be living like you are now?

Cy: Well, its a long story. During the year 1988...from the day I was born till 1988, I was living pretty good like other people do. I had a brand new home I just bought. Stayed there for 15 years all the way up to 1988. I had pretty cars and driving around in Cadillacs. The last lady I had, me and her didn't get along too well. At that point, I just snapped. Walked out the door of my home, walked out to the street and I never returned. She left and I left and we left the house with all the furniture sitting there and the car sitting in the yard. She never returned and I never returned so.... since 1988. I walked from that part of life into another part of life, street life. I didn't care about my home no more. It was between me and her. Just left everything sitting there. One day a real estate man came and found me some kind of way and asked since my home was gone, did I want some money for it, just don't let it go and I said yes. He gave me about \$1000 dollars in 1988, that was the largest amount of money I had. I don't know what happened to all the furniture in the house but I had a Cadillac in the yard that was paid for. I just snapped out of that part of life and took to the streets and then one thing led to another, I started drinking heavy, beer, liquor, then I got on drugs. Right now I am doing pretty good. I have been fighting the drug

thing since 1988. I have been coming here to New Life and they been praying a lot for me. I am getting a lot of help from the New Life. They help me with the drug thing. I am kinda drug free now. I don't know where the next time will..... I have been talking to people...they told me how to get off of drugs, to trust in the Lord and everything. They was a lot of help from New Life Inn. Since 1988 till 94, I have been back and forth, back and forth since that year. They helped me out a lot for staying alive and everything else cause I could been dead.

As Cy relates his life story in response to Mark's questions, he continues to indicate a life of responding to triggers. He is responding to whatever it is that exerts pressure and is thus dominating at the present time. In addition, Cy divides his life into epochs in which dominating forces are at work. In this way, he depicts his life as going from one epoch to another. Not only are the day to day events precipitated by triggers, but in some sense the epochs themselves are differentiated by turning points that contain triggers.

A primary turning point for Cy was 1988, when he walked away from his "home. For the 15 years prior to 1988, he sees his life as "like other people." He had a new home that he had just bought, and he had pretty cars, including a Cadillac. The "normal" seems to have dominated him. But in 1988, he walked away from his home when he and what he describes as "the last lady I had didn't get along too good" parted company. In response, he snapped and walked away from that life. "I walked from that part of life into another part of life, street life. I didn't care about my home no more. It was between me and her. Just left everything sitting there."

Cy describes the transition in more detail than he described other events by pointing out that he doesn't know what happened to the furniture and car. While on the streets, a real estate man found him and gave him \$1,000 for his equity in the house. But Cy had already moved appreciably along the transition from the epoch of domiciled life to street life.

In the new epoch, everything changes. From 1988 until the present, he has been "going back and forth" as a series of events navigate him through time. This leads him to tell of "going back and forth." In his story, one thing leads to another—leaving home, alcohol, drugs. Life is little more than a sequenced response to various triggers. He sees this as a natural progression, living within a range of "going back and forth" from getting help from the missions to the possibility that he "could have been dead" because of the natural hazards of his life.

Turning points are a common way of marking time for many people who live on the streets. As I listened to their stories, and analyzed their interviews, I heard them link large parts of their experience to events that were in one way or another pivotal, depending on the particulars of their biographical linkages. Angel is an example of this. The pivotal point in his life was in his mother's living room "ten years ago when God took the taste out of my mouth." From that point in time forward, even though he was homeless, Angel's life was focused on his new construction of time, time in which he prepared for God's future. Cy, in contrast, marks 1988 as a point in time from which his life began to disintegrate.

At this point, Mark directs the interview to the question of safety and danger, asking him directly:

Q: How safe is it out there?

Cy: It's dangerous. I could be laying in the weeds.... people do all kind of naughty things.

While Cy doesn't dwell on the dangers from others, he implies that the streets are filled with threats of danger at the hands of others. He references the danger by saying that some people do naughty things. As with Angel, Cy is aware that the possibility always exists for someone to do violence to an unprotected man who is asleep. Nor do the "weeds" offer protection. Without secure shelter, Cy is at the mercy of good fortune and can only hope that he will not be noticed. As he continues, Cy shifts his horizons from danger to the problems of daily living--hygiene and clothes.

Cy: A lot of times, especially over here by the river, they have a big water hose and when I can't take a bath at the mission I use one of those big water hose and take a bath and have soap and every thing. Under bridges I can throw some clothes under there. I can use my mission time and take a shower here. Then I get free clothes. Most of the time I just pray everything gonna work out to the good. Sometimes I have a bad part of life and I just get back down again and I just have to build myself back up and then...

Cy begins to be more detailed about life on the streets during this epoch. While not all of life is bad, certainly much of it is, so much so that Cy characterizes it as "a bad part of life." These bad parts of life are triggers and forces that result in Cy's "getting down" again. At those points, the only coping

mechanism is prayer. These "bad parts of life" stand in contradistinction to time spent at the mission during other parts of life (note that he doesn't refer to these as "good parts of life") when he is able to obtain showers (with soap), clothes, and food. Mark then asks Cy to elaborate on the meaning of "a bad part of life."

Q: Give me an example of a bad part of life getting you. You feel like now you're not in a bad part of life.

Cy: Well the bad part is when I run out of mission time, I can't come here and take a decent shower and get decent clothes and be around a lot of people and I can talk instead of being alone, so when I don't have mission time, that's the bad part, uh, I just try to figure things out from day to day, and it get rough. Sometimes it might rain, in the winter time, it's cold outside, and you don't have no heat, and in the summer time, it rains and you don't have no roof over your head. That's the baddest time. and those mosquitos out there in the woods, bitin' you, and uhhhhhhh around your ear, and run you kinda crazy, run you insane--they go uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, and you try to knock it away and he keep comin' after yo head, and you already covered your head with a blanket, and you cover your head with a blanket, and heat build up under the blanket, so you got double heat. That's kinda bad for you. Sweatin' and ever thing. That's some of the roughest time I had. I been in the weeds and they been awful bad.

Q: Is that what you mean, like you're going nuts?

Cy: Yeah, and most of the time I be hopin' uh, most of the time I hate for it to get dark, cause in the dark you got to deal with the unsafe. From the evenin' to the mornin' uh they get up under the blanket and they's no way to brush em off. And some times you get hungry during the night and they's no food and you can't wait till morning, and you have to wait, so you go down to the mission and ask them for breakfast and they not supposed to give it to you, but some of the guys have a heart, and one or two of them, they'll give us food, you know. They won't let us starve to death. You know, they'll give us food.

At Mark's prompting, Cy becomes highly articulate about what "the bad times" are. They (the baddest times) occur when he runs out of mission time. At that point, there are no resources on which he can rely on the streets. Most vivid in his recounting is his struggle with mosquitos. Out in the weeds, or wherever he is at night, he is bitten throughout the night with no defense. But there is more to the bad times than this. There is also the loneliness, when there's no one else with whom to talk. Further, there is the rain, which might occur anytime, and the cold in the winter time. For these reasons, Cy values his "mission time" above almost any other commodity, and its depletion is one of the marks of "bad times."

Cy then elaborates in more detail life in the weeds with the mosquitos and how there's no way that they can be avoided. When he attempts to defend himself against them by covering himself with blankets, the heat builds up and becomes intolerable. This is particularly bad at night, or in the "dark," times that he equates with bad times. During the dark, he is even more likely to be confronted with the unsafe (a brief reference back to "naughty things" some people will do), the mosquitos, and with hunger, all of which become even more pronounced in the dark. As we continue the interview, Cy presents a picture to us of utter misery that was only ameliorated by the ultimate generosity of people who work at the mission who "won't let us starve to death," even though they are not supposed to give food away before the appointed time.

Looking to other experientially defined events, Cy returns to conventional time as he references the things he thinks about during the day, Cy is clear. He thinks about the clock.

Q: When you're out there by yourself, or even when you're walking the streets during the day, what kinds of things do you think about. I mean, you definitely get a lot of thinking done when you're by yourself.

Cy: Well, most of the time what I think about, I think about the clock. The hours and the minutes. I be hoping they go by. At a certain time every day, maybe 12 o'clock, sometimes you can find people that come down to the park when you're sittin' there and don't have any mission time, and they'll give you food from 6 o'clock in the morning till 12. I be wishing to see when 12 o'clock come. In the evenin' time, when 5 o'clock come, I go, cause then (unintelligible) I just see time go by.

Out of the array of possible objects of contemplation, Cy says, "most of the time what I think about, I think about the clock." Cy, attends to the clock, making it the object of his conscious thought. In this sense, the clock becomes one more force that shapes his life. The clock inhabits a place in his thought as an object that contains the minutes and hours that hang heavy in his consciousness. In the main, Cy views the hours and minutes as objects of dread, "hoping they go by." They are indicators of time that he views as an adversary, something that is to be killed, or more of the same blank temporal space that triggers a usually endless search for something to fill it.

Concurrently, however, time may bring relief for other needs to an otherwise passive Cy. At 6:00 in the morning until 12:00, "when you're sittin' there and don't have any mission time," some people may be found who will give

food away. But at 12:00, that possibility fades, regardless of whether or not food has been offered, leaving the next five hours empty and "dragging by." Through these ways, Cy literally sees time as object that passes before his eyes, often too slowly.

The Future

For most people who live in the structured, domiciled world, time is constructed to include the future. Many live their lives in the context of building a future. In this sense, the future is built on the present, but it is seen as a different era or time period, an enhanced era to which the present is contributor. For Cy, the future is much the same. Yet there is little in the way of linkage between "the clock", or calendar time, or the things he frequently references, and the future that he envisions. For him to work on his future is for him to passively "receive" certain things as building blocks. Until this point in the conversation, Cy does not focus on the future. However, at Mark's prompting, he speaks of his future as he conceives it.

Q: Do you ever think about the future as more than your' next meal, or do you ever think about what's going to happen next month, or do you not really try and plan that far ahead?

Cy: Well, uh, one thing that I been working on--with the VA, I was in the Vietnam War 13 months with the Marine Corps, and later I been goin' down to the Veteran Service uh on uh Duval Street and uh, they tryin to get my income for post traumatic stress from the Vietnam War because I should have applied for it, but they got papers and they tryin' to get my income started and if I get that started that would be a disability for me and then I could take that and start another disability and I could get

some income coming in and then maybe I can reach a goal then, try to think of a goal and then work on it and make the goal come true. You had asked me earlier do I think about a place to live, a place to call home and uh I haven't been thinking about a place, gettin' a place call home, but if I get a decent income comin' in then I could, as you suggest, I could use it for my goal, a nice place to live, a apartment, or a room, or even maybe a home, I need to get some income comin' in. They told me down at the VA that the chances were pretty good that I would have an income comin' in later, about a couple of months from now, and I could start workin' on, you know my situation.

The future doesn't occur in Cy's mind until it is generated by some prompting from outside. Although it is painful for him to look to the past, he references that with many triggers and little effort. But the future does not occur without a pointed question. Now, triggered by the interview, he speaks of the future.

Cy equates the future with goals of obtaining a "home," which is linked with the hope of income from pensions that he hopes to receive as a result of post traumatic stress syndrome. From this perspective, the future is situated with particular reference to the VA obtaining pensions for him. He says that he should have applied for the pension, but did not. Now the VA has the papers and he hopes that, this time, they will be able to obtain a pension for him. If this occurs, then there is a future with "a nice place to live, a apartment, or a room, or even maybe a home." Without receipt of those pensions one would suspect that Cy will continue to think about the clock, the hours and the minutes, and hoping that they go by.

For a brief time, Cy talks about his feelings of having no place in the world, how his homeless condition is not understood by the domiciled, and how the domiciled look down on him. Then in response to Mark's question, the conversation turns again to "mission time."

Q: Do you get help from other missions, like Claire White, or like Trinity, do you go to those other missions as well?

Cy: Trinity. You get mission time there. I go to Trinity, go to church on Sunday. I been goin' pretty regular lately. I get a free night goin' to church Sunday, and then I go in a certain time. Then here at the mission, they teach the Lord, and I learn a lot from here.

Cy is well aware of other places, in addition to this particular mission, where he is able to get help. The primary help he receives from other missions is "mission time." But the mission time that he references is not for free. This time, he speaks of receiving additional mission time, "a free night [of mission time by] goin' to church Sunday." Cy expresses no resentment for the requirement of attending worship in order to receive this additional mission time. Rather, he makes a simple, matter of fact, statement outlining the exchange of church attendance, one commodity, for the other commodity, "mission time."

CHAPTER 4 AIN'T GOT NO PLACE OR NOTHIN'

In the vernacular, the word "homeless" is used by many in a way that would imply a generally agreed upon meaning alongside other commonplace understandings. But the word is lifeless until we view it in relationship to specific horizons of meaning. These horizons form around the viewpoints and lived experience of those who make use of the term. It is a word that, as much as any other, is intentionally used to construct, to inform, to persuade, or to evoke a desired affect. The connotations that the word elicits among the domiciled are myriad. They are, however, for the most part negative, frequently creating a sense of distress at the thought that "this could happen to us or someone we know." For some, the connotation might well be akin to the "agency worker" who views the homeless as "victims," or more aptly put, to quote one, as "domestic refugees." For others, the word homeless simply means unfortunate, people who are down on their luck. Or the word may convey disgust at those not willing to work or otherwise conform to our economic and industrial expectations, while "littering our streets." These are but a few of the themes of usage among the social definitions and typifications of homeless people within the domiciled world.

Another way of exploring "homeless" is to explore the horizons of meaning of "home" (Mack, 1993) for those who are themselves "homeless." Viewed from this perspective, with the spectacles of the homeless, the view is very different. For many, "home" is something to be escaped, a source of painful memories of neglect, or conflict, or the absence of caring where caring and nurturing have been expected. For others, home is referenced as something that entraps, that obligates, that binds, and is to be avoided. For others, "home" is a longed for tool, used to construct images of the self for presentation or consumption in an effort to construct or reconstruct the self or others. Or again, "home" is a longed for symbol of worldly success, or ownership, and with it, a right to be. And for others, home suggests a place of safety, of comfort, and of autonomy in their lives. These, and other images constitute the horizons of meaning for those who sit in city parks, reside in missions, eat in soup kitchens, or stand at busy intersections. It is through the gaze of those who are called homeless that "home" takes on the meaning of what they are less, or in other instances what they have come to construct when they use the term "home" (Hazan, 1990).

As these horizons are examined, a common unifying thread that runs through them is "place." Place is a common sense, taken for granted term. Yet, in the construction of social worlds, "place," or spatiality, becomes pivotal as its construction defines the context that determines many of the subjective

meanings and life patterns that constitute the lives of homeless people (Pastalan, 1970).

Space, however, is not only context. Space, when read as place, becomes an active object of action to which people respond in ways that impact them significantly in their interaction with others and with the social world. Place, for those who are homeless, as with others, both professional sociologist and non-professional sociologist alike, has both social and geographical dimensions. Socially, we reference place as status, or social location. Social location defines those to whom we relate and the appropriate ways of relating to them. By our social location, we gain a perspective on the social world that is intimately related to our "place." Social location defines what is expected of us and how it is we define our situation as we act within the social world.

But geographical location is important also. It is within our geographical location that we are likewise defined and by which we define ourselves and others. As both geographical and social locations are the products of human making (Anderson, 1978; Soja, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 1987), those who have a sense of place tend to feel that, to a greater or lesser degree, they have some sense of belonging within that place. Soja (1989), in his exploration of spatiality in the postmodern world, for example, asserts that time conceals the issue of simultaneity, which is a primary dimension of the contemporary social world. When we look at the simultaneous arrangement of the world, we see a world geographically structured to accommodate diverse social arrangements

within space. This simultaneity makes visible the unequal distribution of resources, but it also makes possible an understanding of place for members, even though this may only be a street corner or similar small section of town in which the members feel a sense of belonging and identity. (Anderson, 1978, 1990; Whyte, 1955; Liebow, 1967).

In speaking with people who are chronically homeless, and in particular, those who live almost altogether outside of the social structures of the domiciled world, it is not unusual to hear the convergence of refrains that speak of homelessness as placelessness. When homeless people speak with reference to the absence of place, they speak of their own sense of not belonging, either socially or geographically. This placelessness leaves them devoid of control over location, social or geographical, and makes difficult, if not impossible, the myriad social arrangements that are contingent on place.

To speak of homelessness solely in terms of placelessness, however, would be a grave misinterpretation of the horizons to which homeless people link their understandings of self and social world, for they frequently have organized an alternative sense of place, albeit one that is usually, but not always, considered undesirable. This space, to the eyes of the uninitiated, is typically invisible, either because it is space that is not considered in the everyday comings and goings of those who live in the domiciled world, or because it is structured during residual times. It is both in relation to situations that they define as place or placeless and to contexts that they define as home or

homeless that the chronically homeless men and women with whom we spoke refer as they link their present situation to the experiential realities of their pasts.

The following interviews are the telling of narrative constructions of life, but they also contain the constructions of home and space that thematize these stories. It would be convenient if the interviews fell into neat categories or themes, but they do not. Often there are diverse experiences to which these people link their present lives, and this diversity is frequently both conflicted and found within the same interview.

The first interview is with Rick, and takes place in a mission where two members of the homeless team and I talked with him.

Rick

Rick is a white man in his late forties or early fifties. He was reared in Seattle, WA, but came to Jacksonville with his wife while he was in the Navy. After he left the Navy, he and his wife and their infant son returned to Seattle, where his wife died. After his wife's death, he had problems with his parents that resulted in his returning to Jacksonville. Unable to find work, Rick depleted his funds and, lacking other resources, had no alternative but to live on the streets. After he spent some time as a homeless person, Rick discovered the missions and then began to receive a very small disability pension, after which, when he was able to accumulate enough funds, he began to spend short periods of time in boarding houses. From that time until now, Rick alternately has spent time in

both of these two types of places, depending on whether or not he has the money to spend for a boarding house. Rick sees himself as having been homeless for the past six years, in that he has had no place to go to call home. The meaning that he attaches to this becomes clear in the interview. The team of homeless people with whom I worked interviewed Rick at one of the local missions. He had returned to the mission within the past week, after he was forced to leave the boarding house because of a lack of funds.

The interview began with a very general discussion of why Rick thought people became homeless in the first place, and then he began to tell his own life story. When asked about home and homelessness, Rick speaks of the irrelevance of dwelling, or "place."

Q: Unhuh. O.K. uh, are you wishing, or thinking back that you want a place that you call your own again?

Rick: Well, not in that sense any more. I think home is where family is, really. Irregardless of whether the house is mine or not. That's not what makes it a home. Just like this rooming house, as far as place to be alone, this rooming house, I'll never call that home. It's just a place to stay. Uh, because what makes it home is, you know, friends and family.

Q: O.K. Rick, uh, I don't know how, how basically to put this, but, how do you fit, so to speak, as a homeless person, as you are right now, how do you think you fit in this, in this city, you know in the everyday going's on in the city?

Rick: That's a good question. [laughs] I really have to be honest and say that I'm not, I'm not much different than the other homeless people.

Q: O.K.

Rick: You know, it's like the saying, you know, we all came over on a different ship, but we're all in the same boat now. And that's the way I see it. It doesn't matter how I got here. Being homeless is being homeless. It's being without friends and family that, that you care about and love. And, uh, if you don't have that, you really don't fit in much anywhere. So, being homeless means not fitting in anywhere.

Rick is not unusual in what he says. Many of the people who are homeless express a longing for family when they discuss home. This is not to say that they don't care about place, but in the ordering of the priorities of their lives, a sense of belonging to some form of intimate primary group is even more important than place. Thus, when Rick speaks of what he says home is not is significant as he separates home from place. For him, home is family and friends that you love and care about. In more traditional sociological terms, home is, for Rick, a primary group in which one has a social location, or status. Without family and friends, he sees a house, or a room, or any structure, as "just a place to stay." He has that periodically, but still considers himself homeless as he is cut off from his family. Further, family is a social group or structure that is derived from the larger community, is linked to the larger community in a number of ways, and receives its resources from the broader community. As Rick scans the outlines of his own history, he tells the story of his life in ways that make visible his understanding that only by having membership in a family does a person have access to that community. Without friends and family, there is no connectedness, and this lack of connectedness has multiple ramifications for his self-understanding of being homeless, such as feelings of not belonging to any

larger community. There is, further, a sense that what happens within it (the larger community) is of no concern to him or other homeless people. Although Rick's depiction of himself as different from other homeless people, both visually and verbally, he ultimately lays claim to a commonality with them. By portraying all homeless people as being "in the same boat," he is underscoring the lack of familial affiliation that he believes they all share. When asked whether or not he ultimately wants another home of his own, in the sense of his own private dwelling, he replies in the negative as that is not what constitutes home.

Cindy

Another homeless person, who accompanied me, interviewed Cindy at a day shelter for homeless. Normally, she lives at one of the missions, but on this particular day she was out looking for a job and came by this particular center with a friend of hers. Cindy is a black woman in her late 20's. She is regarded as very attractive by those who know her, particularly the men. She was dressed well, and as we listened to her, she spoke clearly and was poised and self assured. Early in the conversation, she said that she had never worked, but that she had a child when she was an adolescent. When she was 16 or 17, she couldn't remember which, she left home and left the child with her mother. From that time on, Cindy has lived in a variety of modes, most of which most people would call homeless. However, Cindy projects a different way of understanding

her situation from that of many of her colleagues on the street. Rather than seeing herself as homeless, Cindy assembles her life by depicting it as complete, having a home, but choosing not to stay there.

Cindy: Homeless? I really don't consider myself homeless. I always got some place to stay. It may be a different place every night, but I always got a place to stay. Sometimes I'd jus' party for three, four days, and then crash, wherever I was. I'd wake up and party some more. I might go to a different place, or get with some different folks, and sometimes I wouldn't know where I was or how I got there, or where I had been. But I always had a place to stay. Now I had a home. But it really wasn't home. And I wouldn't stay there much. That was with my mother. I could stay there any time I wanted, cept when she'd kick me out. Then I couldn't stay there. But I really didn't care, cause I didn't want to stay there anyhow. Like now. I got my life all together, and I could go back there, but I don't want to. I just want to get a place of my own. Like an apartment. But right now, that is where I stay. And I'll stay right there till I get straight, then I'll get a place of my own to stay...I really don't want to stay with nobody else. I can't do what I want to do if I stay with somebody else.

In her conversation, Cindy orients to home as a stable physical place, or structure, portraying her mother's home as a home in which she could stay. This is in stark contrast to home as intimate relations, as she explains that she was free to stay with her mother, except for those times when her mother kicked her out of the house. There is another sense in which Cindy shows that she always has had a home, however, because she considered herself as having a home if she had a place to stay, if even for that night alone. This she felt she always had. As Cindy tells the story of her life, she verbally paints her life as lived primarily around a party lifestyle, in which she traveled from party to party until

she crashed. She either did not know or was not concerned with where she was when she awoke, but made the assumption that she would always have a place to stay. Now, as she recalls her variegated and often turbulent past, she links to the hope of a future in which she will have a place of her own, and plans to obtain that when she has overcome her drug problem, to which she refers as getting straight.

Drawing from her sense of independence, Cindy portrays herself as being a sufficiently free and autonomous spirit that life with anyone else, including her mother, is too constraining. During the day, Cindy spends her time looking for work, or "just messing around," not wanting any more constraints on her than is absolutely necessary. This desire for freedom and autonomy with an absence of constraints is relatively common among the chronically homeless people with whom I have spoken. It is not unusual for them to say how sorry they are for those of us who must live within the constraints of home as conventionally understood, living in "the same ol' place every night," regular rent or mortgage payments, both of which entail keeping a job, or the inability to remain out of doors or otherwise stay wherever we please.

Shorty

One of the clearer depictions of spatial orientation as it is related to home is heard in an interview with Shorty as he links his condition of homelessness to drug usage. Shorty's assigned name for this interview derives from his height.

Shorty is a handsome black man who is 6' 5". He has been lived on and off the streets for several years, although he has been totally on the streets for only a year and a half prior to his admission to drug rehabilitation, and would like very much to become reestablished, with his life back in order, with a job, a relationship, and a home. At the time of the interview, Shorty was in a drug rehabilitation program for homeless people where he was undergoing treatment. We interviewed Shorty at a local mission as a part of the training program for the research team of homeless people. The questions were posed by several members of the team. After preliminary chatting, answering questions, and stating his right to confidentiality, we asked Shorty to briefly tell us his life story.

Shorty: ...Ummm...it would be...I don't know where to start off at, but ahh...I'll just say this, that I've been there....what cause meI'm start from here...what caused me to be...end up in [this mission]...ahhh...is my drug problems. The first drug problem I...was using some sort of ahhh...substance alcohol and drugs since I was about 13 years old. I'm 33 now, and ahh...it caused me to...to...lose a lot in life sort to speak. The one thing that's been there constantly has been my family... my...my..Mother and Father has never turned their backs on me. And ahhh...with her strength and Jesus, that's what's keeping me going right now.

I got two kids and ahhh I...they were conceived when I was a teen-ager and I was...my daughter is 18; my son 17 now. And umm...that kind of slowed me down and got me to going...I went into the Army, six years in the Army...and was a family man and got away from the use of the drugs, but I was still out drinking a lot.

The setting in which Shorty tells his story is a mission, where his life is organized around a religiously based drug treatment program. As Shorty views his life in panoramic sweeps, he relates his present circumstance to his drug

usage as a way of making his life a coherent whole. He does this without clearly articulating how his life is at the present. But as he looks at his life, comparing his present circumstance to the circumstances of his childhood, he attributes agency to drugs, which caused him to lose much of his potential life. From this point on, he sees his whole life as shaped by drugs, and his sense of loss of a valuable part of his life he attributes to drugs. Shorty begins his life story with drugs. Drugs are the central focal points about which his story turns, the one factor that accounts for how his life has come to the present state of homelessness and the ingredient around which his life is organized. It has not always been this way for Shorty.

When Shorty looks to his childhood, and scans the unfolding of his life across the years to the present, he sees his mother and father providing a prior, yet arrested, underpinning for him, and never turning their backs on him. In narrating the story of his life, Shorty depicts a blending of this background of stable family with drugs and the streets that ultimately produces the self he presents to us. In his portrayal himself, there is a notable lack of agency in his account. The active agents in his life have been drugs on the one hand and family on the other, with a little Jesus added. From this present perspective, these two agencies are juxtaposed. Shorty sees his life now as being the product of interaction between these factors, as drugs have brought him to the point of homelessness and dependency. His mother's strength and Jesus are the sustaining factors in his life as he seeks rehabilitation. As his story

progresses, Shorty shifts his gaze from his family as his primary group to the "tramp circle," a group of homeless drug users who become his primary group on the streets. In telling this story, Shorty draws from each of these horizons to present a picture of himself to himself and to us that, to him, forms a coherent whole.

Shorty, however, does not cast his gaze only on drugs and family, but on himself as he perceives himself as having been in an earlier time. As an adolescent he had fathered two children. Yet, in telling this part of his story, he never specifies their living arrangements or their custodial home. What is also notably absent in his story is whether or not the fiancée he references was also the children's mother.

However, as Shorty looks to his own life events for horizons of meaning, he sees himself as, fundamentally, a family man. One linkage that helps to form a part of the meaning of this sense of self was his effort to support his family, going into the army for six years. Within his army experience, there is a reprieve from the control of his life by drugs, although he continues to drink a lot. While Shorty's memories of his domestic life are filled with confusion and contradictions, the persistence of his self understanding as a family man remains and he links this understanding to the meaning of home as social place where family lives. After spending several minutes recounting some of his army experiences, Shorty resumes the narration of his life story.

Shorty: Ahh, after I did my time in the Army, I came back here in Jacksonville, and ummm...still was drinking, started seeing some old friends and started drugging. Ummm, but still had the constant of the family background to where I started working with the City, ahh..a few months after I graduated. And worked with the City of Jacksonville for nine years and ahhh...I got established and everything else, was making...looking at over \$10 an hour. That's all the way up to last year. This..this time last year. But my drugging, they got ...it escalated to the point to where I was making so much money, and didn't have much to do with it, that ahhh...dealing with drugs problems got worst and worst; and then I started, you know, taking things from the family and..doing lil things that crack cocaine will make you do to alienate you from people who love ya. And ahh...got to the point to where I ... me and my fiancé separated and moved out and didn't want to stay with my parents because I knew what I was gone do there. I knew it was gone get worser and worser and so I...I...came on this side of town and started being with a friend of my and...and I was joining the club man...so that would dropped \$500 every two weeks cause that would still enable me, but, and then I was working out of the labor pool at the same time.

After his departure from the army, Shorty shifts his gaze to the world of work in Jacksonville, where he went to work for the City. This was his linkage to becoming established, and a time and place where he was connected. His pay finally increased to \$10.00 per hour. This connectedness, this being established, lasted in attenuated form until the year prior to the interview. During this period in his life, Shorty sees himself as being anchored at various levels in stable social and geographical space, the social space being linked to geographical space and geographical space being informed by social space.

Shorty is not without memories of the new beginnings of his troubles with drugs, however. He recalls that when he came back to Jacksonville, although

he continued to drink, he began seeing old friends and started drugging. The continued support of family remained, however, and the juxtaposition of family and drugs began anew. As Shorty recalls his deepening involvement in drugs, he sees that his world begins to change. He begins a transition from his family (parents, siblings, fiancé, and children) to a world that increasingly revolved around drugs. When Shorty looks to his memories of increasing drug usage, the picture he paints is one in which drugs were more than a substance; they were a force with which to be reckoned in their own right, so much so that they are at the heart of the life of groups, they were causal in the alienation of people from important relationships, they reshaped personality and they distorted values. But they didn't simply and suddenly overtake one's life. They do their work slowly, and relentlessly lead one through a transition of the whole of life. Shorty paints a picture of life recounting this as he remembers having excess money to spend, and then spending \$500 every two weeks on drugs. That not being sufficient, he began to steal from his family and do other things to acquire drugs, "the lil things that crack cocaine will make you do to alienate you from people who love ya." As Shorty continues his transition to the world of drugs, it is marked by a shift of his social world to an ill defined and continuously shifting world, one without structure and without depth or meaning other than the experience of being high. This vista of drugs was ever visible as a primary factor in his linkage to past horizons, and the role of drugs formed the formative dimensions of Shorty's present perspective. As they assume a more central

place in his social life, the shape of his socio-spatial orientation changes significantly.

When his fiancé ended their relationship and he moved out of the house, the anchor of his family of origin remained there for him. Yet, as he relates this part of his past, the parents potential acceptance and open invitation to return home were not viable and he chose not to return because he knew the place that drugs had assumed in his life, and consequently what lifestyle he would import to his mother's home. Drugs took him away from family and friends to new relationships that centered around doing drugs. These relationships displaced his family as he was joining the club.

But the shift was not merely one of relationships. The shift was also one of geography. He moved from the side of town where he was reared, and where his family lived, to a new side of town. With this move he began to work for the labor pool. As with Angel and Cy, and other homeless people, Shorty's life is shaped, in part, by turning points. This is one of those pivotal points in his life and signifies an important turning point in the transition. He is no longer established. Now the locus of his entire world has shifted. Family has been displaced by the club, established work for the city has been displaced by working for the labor pool, and he has moved physically from one side of town to another. The only remaining component of his life that resembled the "normal" for him was that he was able to stay with his friend and share expenses and so he could keep a roof over his head. In response to further questioning about his

own transition, Shorty describes the new world with which he was becoming affiliated.

Shorty: That's why ...that's one way I got to getting out meeting the so called tramps...they're tramps cause the majority of 'em worked by the labor pool whenever they want two hours every other day; some of them worked everyday. Still they're in the tramp circle. And ahhh...after while, my unemployment ran out and I was just working out of the labor pool and at that time, that's when me and my friend you know, my friend I was staying with wasn't paying the bills and...and got put out. And ahhh...I stepped outside for about two weeks or so. Ahh...I really just sleeping outside so to speak to where I knew it was coming; I didn't really care... I could've gone home to my Mom if I really wanted to, but I wasn't ready to stop doing what I was doing.

As Shorty articulates this linkage to the completion of his transition to the streets, he verbalizes the significance of geographical boundaries in terms of their meaning, and what life was like as he changes location from his residence in his original side of town to this side of town. In this geographical shift he ceases identification with family and begins to meet and socialize with what he called tramps, and ultimately becomes a part of what he called the "tramp circle." Tramps, he recalls, were people who worked at the labor pool, either on a very sporadic basis, or on a daily basis. Tramps were not established, at least not in the more spatially structured world of the domiciled. There was no place that they should be each day. Reflecting on his transition to his present condition, Shorty recalls that his movement from family man to tramp, and from one side of town to "this side of town" is accompanied by a concurrent change in lifestyle, from living in an apartment to being homeless. He links that experience to his

own lack of a sense of control or power over his destiny as he could see it approaching, but he was unwilling, or unable, to stop doing what he was doing. When Shorty speaks of home, home means the old side of town, his mother and father and other intimate relationships. Being homeless means being without all of that. He juxtaposes the linkage between the distant horizons of domiciled life to near horizons of homeless life, and reiterates that the central factor in this juxtaposition was drug usage and the difference drugs made in his social and geographical location. Some homeless people are able in some way to emotionally transition between linkages to horizons of home and family, which were similar to Shorty's experience with his family of origin, to other horizons for their subjective meaning of home or intimacy. Shorty does not do this. There is no sense in which he is able to see life in the hobo camps and living with druggies as being any kind of a substitute for home. Nevertheless, he tells of the power of drugs as he recalls that he continued to know that he could still go home to "my Mom," but he also knew that he wasn't ready to stop doing what he was doing. As the conversation continued, Shorty's gaze falls on his experience of helplessness in his struggle with drugs.

Shorty: So...ahhh...I...I...after a couple of weeks of it; last winter, this was the last of November of last year. And I just wasn't cut out for it. The weather was just too cold at night; I wasn't happy...I go to work every day, get paid, but I would use drugs and stuff instead of trying to find me somewhere to stay. And ahh...at night time, that's when I would wonder if I would ever stop; but the next day I would do the same thing.

Recalling Cy's account of "bad times," the elements of rain, heat, and cold are common enemies of homeless people. These frame the basis of much of their experience of life without shelter. As Shorty links to his early days on the streets, at the forefront of his thoughts are his experiences of contending with the cold weather that dominated his life during its occurrence, but drugs controlled his life. The cold weather was sufficiently uncomfortable to draw his thoughts toward a straight, and warm, life. But the insidious drives instilled by drugs reformed his decisions, and the desire for drugs overpowered his sense of discomfort. The next day, he would again choose drugs. He would earn sufficient money on some of the days to get a place to stay, but he bought drugs instead. As Shorty's gaze falls upon himself in his now placeless environment, he realizes that he has become fully tramp in every sense of the word.

Tramps, however, have knowledge of their resources, and they share knowledge of available resources with each other. Shorty, now a part of the tramp circle, was socialized into his newly acquired social world. He found from them where he could stay when it was cold, and where he could eat. "This side of town" became his side of town. As we listened to Shorty, we heard the story of one of the ones of whom Angel spoke when he talked of drugs not wanting you to work. In Shorty's life, drugs transformed time from a teleological context and instrumentality to a cyclical dimension in which sleep is foregone while doing drugs, leisure time is centered on doing drugs, and work is accomplished in order to secure drugs. Living revolves around getting high, and getting high

becomes *raison d'être* for living. As the story continues, the topic remains centered on the world of drugs and the streets. In the following part of the interview, Shorty describes this life, telling how he learned the basics of survival.

Shorty: So one day after I learned the tramp circle, where they go at to eat; what they do on you know, Sunday you know it...go round to this place and that place, this place and that place and then you could eat four or five times and if you need somewhere to stay, if it's too cold, you can go to New Life Inn or the Salvation Army, which I took advantage of a few times. It was a year before I seen this.

Soon after Shorty made the transition from the world of the domiciled to the world of the homeless, the outlines of his social world assumed the shape of a life fashioned by the dynamics and the necessities of the streets. He recalls learning from the other tramps something of how to acquire resources to meet one's needs. One of the first things that he learned was to develop a daily round of acquiring those resources. After Shorty spends more time describing the transition to the streets and reflecting on losing a part of his life to drugs, he begins to recall how he developed a once per week circuit in which he spent his Sundays.

Q: Okay...you talked about ahh...at one place you said you found the world's transplant

Shorty: Yeah

Q: Out on the streets..right? And they go to this church and that church and different places you wouldn't dare to think. Now what can you tell me the places that you went.

Shorty: Ahhh...to be totally honest with you, I don't know the name of the churches and facilities that I went to. Ahhh, I know

on...just a typical...say typical Sunday morning. Ahh, I would normally get out there on Sunday morning ahh...when I was out there on the circuit. I would get up Sunday morning, we had church off 8th and Main. They served breakfast, lil sandwiches and soup. I sat around 8:30 in the morning, that was the first stop. I don't know the name of it. And then, we would go down to Hemming Park and then have service down there on Sundays and they would serve soup and sandwiches around 11 o'clock. From there, we would race over here and go to the service, you have to go to the service there to eat. At New Life Inn. So I would go to that service and after that eat again. By then, I would've already made me a lil doggy bag and everything else where to get me through the rest of the day. At New Life Inn, there was one of three churches downtown always served around 1..1:30. We would go down there and eat again or get my doggie bag or whatever there is I need to do and ahh from there, you'd be so full, and tired of walking around trying to get to these places. To where I was ahh..probably come here and check in; if it's a cold night or if I hadn't used my..my two nights a month.

I ...I stayed there for about four..four times before I got into the program. And cou...with a couple of ...after I had...after the first night you..your time...you couldn't come back anymore. If it was a situation at last meal and I had time enough to stay here, I would come here to New Life. If I didn't, I would just go back out to...to the lil cat hole that me and my friend had. In a..in a lil outhouse...like a sleeping quarters sort to speak.

Q: In other words, is that close to round here, or...

Shorty: Yeah, it's in Springfield, over off ahh...close to 7th and Main Street area.

Q: How far would you say that all these places are apart?

Shorty: I'd say about a mile, mile and a half.

Shorty remembers Sundays as he learns to go from place to place, church to church, or mission to mission, worshiping, or otherwise doing whatever

he needed to do in order to get food. As Shorty recalls this weekly circuit, there emerges a distinct sense of place. The places that he references are within less than a mile or a mile and a half of each other. This is all within walking distance, and that is a necessity for the vast majority of the people of the streets. While he is tramp, this is his place. While he is in this place, he is tramp. His weekly circuit is but one way in which he defines his place. Shorty is not clear as to the exact names of all of the churches or other places to which he went, but he is clear as to where they are as they are mapped in his memory. Thus, when he catalogs a typical Sunday morning, he notes that one church served breakfast till 8:30, and from there he outlines a day filled with the acquisition of food until he was too tired and either went to the mission, if he had "mission time" left, or if not, he returned to his cathole.

Later in this conversation, and in other conversations, we learned what is meant by the term, "cathole." A cathole is a place one has claimed for sleeping, and at times to store a minimal belongings. Catholes are usually out of the way, hidden from view, and, if attended on a daily basis, may tend to remain in their custody for some time. Catholes may be in the weeds, bushes, under bridges, abandoned buildings, or other out of the way and little used locations. Shorty and his friend shared a cathole, which he describes as like sleeping quarters. Shorty's cathole was in an abandoned outbuilding.

For Shorty, time and space were shaped by his drug usage. Cocaine was the centerpiece of his life. If he were doing drugs, he would often times spend

the whole night at what I later learned to call a "crack house," as he describes in the following part of the conversation.

Q: Do you stay in the same place every night, if you didn't stay in a Mission or something?

Shorty: Sometimes...it's according to ahh...how long my money went if I was drugging. You know, sometimes, I...I slept you know...not slept, but just stayed up all night in the drug house.

Q: Did you keep your clothes and things with you?

Shorty: Um-hum...I was...was ...the situation where I was much more fortunate than others to where I would go...go home to my parents house probably once every week...probably on a Saturday, or...or my brother's house or something to change clothes and wash and things of that nature. But, I would take...I would have with me a ...at a individual time, a change of clothes. Which I ain't had a set of work clothes and I had a set of clothes I would put on afterwards, you know. But ahh...an..and if it wasn't with me, I had it..had the labor pool itself, where they..they [not clear] weekend. You got overnight bags, they'll let you keep your overnight bags in some of these labor pools...and that's what I...that's what I did a lot.

Q: Did you have any girlfriends on the streets?

Shorty: No...all I had to eliminate all the young ladies who I used to talk to, to where I didn't have any girlfriends, so to speak to call my own, and ...ahh...and that hurt me a lot too, because I..it's not me. But ahh...I would ahh...to be honest with you, I was...when you...when you using drugs of choice which mine was crack cocaine...Crack would bring you any girl you want to have, when you use crack cocaine...so, you know, as far as that aspect of it...I can get a girlfriend anytime I didn't have the money for the drugs.

The conversation turns to lifestyle, mundane issues for the domiciled world, but for Shorty, issues of consequence that make visible the linkages

between the different dimensions of his life on the streets. Shorty's lifestyle is one of clear priorities. When he is asked whether or not he stays in the same place every night, Shorty displays the priority of drugs. He may go back to his cathole, but if he's doing drugs, the availability of drugs becomes paramount. Rather than sleep, or worry about his claim to his cathole, if he has money, he stays at the "drug house," doing drugs.

While Shorty's social world came to be built around drugs, there remains a tenuous connection with his family, his parents and his brother that survived his drug usage. He recalls going home periodically, where they never turned their back on him, to clean up and wash clothes. He was also able to acquire more clothes at the mission when his were too dirty or too ragged to be worn. His only clothes were those on his back plus a change of clothes that he kept in an overnight bag. To accentuate his entrenchment in the lifestyle of the streets, Shorty says some of the labor pools will allow people to leave small bags with their belongings there while they work. Many of the people on the streets with whom I have spoken know that this is a special perk for those who are regulars at the labor pools, and this is a facility that is only used by them.

Shorty's personal relationships and social space were also shaped by drugs as his links to old girlfriends have been broken and potential links to new ones established. Because of his transition, he laments his lost relationships with girlfriends from his earlier, more domiciled life, and that he has no present girlfriend whom he can call his own. His statement that this hurts him because

"it's not me," is likewise telling, as he is acknowledging that he, Shorty, is more than just a body. He is comprised of memories, relationships, and linkages to a specific social world. To be without these prior linkages is to acknowledge a major change in his identity. This, too, is another instance of his priorities. This is not to say, however, that Shorty could not get a girlfriend anytime he wanted if he had the money to buy cocaine. Cocaine had become the primary medium of exchange in his social world, and his social world was structured around it. If he possessed cocaine, he owned the wherewithal with which to acquire the affection, or more, of women within that same circle.

When questioned about the area, or areas, of town in which he lived his life, Shorty verbally portrays fixed boundaries of his world, and notes in his telling a consideration he has for his family. He was clear that he lived his life in the downtown area.

Q: Did you ever said, for example, did you ever go out on the Westside when you were on the streets?

Shorty: No, because the one thing about the time that I stayed on the streets, I was embarrassed, you know, because I been constantly with regular... some middle class family, and got two brothers and then [not clear] my sisters and [not clear] and I'm [not clear] of ..of my sisters and brothers; my brothers and my sisters and ahh...I'm embarrassed...I've been going...I....I'm from the Westside sort of speak. So I never went on the Westside, didn't go on the North side cause my brother lives over there, South side just too far and Springfield...I didn't know anybody and no one knew me...so you know, I could come over here and just you know, hide out sort of speak.

Q: So you sort of went from up around; up towards north on Main down to [unclear]

Shorty: The furthest I would go is from 9th and Main to Hemming Plaza...that's it. You know. That's the furthest I would go.

Q: And...

Shorty: And from...from in between; especially in between....

Q: Okay

Shorty: Like the mission here, or some crack house there. But it wasn't ...you know, I've never strayed past say Jefferson Street this way or I never strayed past Winn Dixie that way or anything of that nature.

Q: Now would you say most of these people on the streets are... most of them ...

Shorty: Do the same that thing

Q: What...pick out areas [unclear]

Shorty: They do the same thing...exactly...the ones that are in this area right here, will do the same thing except a few of them, who are in...in drugs...they will go as far as what we call uptown, which is like a lil couple of blocks down...a couple of blocks ahh west there. That's the den [not clear]. They can go from...but that's still in the same area...I...one thing I know about them...is if you...when you on that surface, that's why we see the same faces here all the time. Even though you know we got homes all over the city, all OVER the city, but you see the same faces here every month...every month, you'll see the same. Every..every now and then, you might find a new person coming in. I guess like myself who..who...a new person might come in, but you see the same faces because they used to the same surface, they used to doing the same thing out...they'll go and work the labor pool in the morning, and in the evening they'll come here and check in; get a meal or ...or they won't go to the labor pool in the morning...they'll hang around...hang out like at Hemming Plaza; walk up and

down, they'll see what they can get up, you know...seeing if they hustle or what. What kind of hustle they can get, whatever..and ahh..or..or if they can get because the Center of Hope...I didn't know anything about that when I was in the...out there.

Q: Um-hum

Shorty: But we don't just go [wasn't clear] you know, and that's everything in the area too. It's not the streets..just a lil past Winn Dixie...Center of Hope is. But you're [not clear] and I..a bunch of ... lot of guys will come back and forth; back and forth ...if it's down that way, then you're down...he might stay a lil bit that way, bit stay a lil bit east, but they don't go South side, Westside, North side. They don't go that..that way. Unless they're going to stay for a while.

Q: Now do..do..right here...groups of people who wants [not clear] streets up on the North side too.

Shorty: Yes...that's what we haven't gotten into yet...and that's where I wouldn't...I wouldn't go bout...cause I know I'm from the Westside like I said; and I know homes [not clear]. They didn't even know anything about...I didn't...I didn't know anything about ... like this...I left my home and everything, but, these guys [not clear] in the bar lot and parked cars and parked trucks and people back porches and things of that nature. They don't...this is just too far for them to come to. A lot of times they have \$.60 they don't want to spend it on a...on a ahhh a bus; they rather get another beer

Q: Um-hum

Shorty: You know, they'll not gonna even you know...they're doing alright right where they at. They don't...and they know everything and everybody where they at. That's a safe kit. When you're homeless, you have to watch your back all the time. Because you know, if they see...they come over here don't know anyone and these...the old champs over here, like we know...know the routine, know for certain they gone see him even though [not clear]. He might not do the things that you know he should do to cover himself and sometimes they

got to take advantage of it. And that's these guys...these champs over here was on the Westside and they'd be the same way.

Q: So..you kind of get known in an area of town

Shorty: And you stay there

Q: And you stay there

Shorty: You stay there

Q: And that's primarily for safety and also because you distant to these people.

Shorty: Your safety and your distance; more so for safety...because you know...you know what these champs here do, you don't know what the champs on the Westside do. You know, well hey I can..I can sleep with my bag right here and these champs ain't gone touch me. If I go on the Westside and stick my bags right here, these champs gone try to roll me or something you know out there. I don't know, I'm just saying...what's the difference...so you know...you tend to...familiarity it means a lot out here. You know, you're familiar with the..the area, the people and nature of the..of the community.

The area of Shorty's travels was, in part, determined by where he felt uncomfortable going, and this was determined by three factors: embarrassment at being seen as a homeless person, walking distance, and feelings of personal safety. Shorty couldn't go to the Westside because of having been reared there. Since his family still lived there, and since people knew him, he felt a sense of embarrassment about going back there, except to do his clothes periodically. On those days, he "dressed up, and looked presentable soes I wouldn't embarrass my momma." He couldn't go to the North side because his brother lived there, and he didn't want to embarrass him.

The second reason for comfort with his area, and discomfort at straying too far from it, was the matter of distance. Any place that was too far to walk, including the south side, would be ruled out of his area. This meant that the Springfield area, which was within a mile of the missions, and the general area where many other homeless people "hung out," became the logical choice of a place for him to find his cathole. Ninth Street and Main marked the northern boundary of his area, and Hemming Plaza marked the southern boundary. His life was live there and his daily round was confined to these boundaries.

A third reason for comfort with his particular area was Shorty's perception that homeless people came to inhabit certain areas, and he came to know those who stayed in his area. If he left his area, as a homeless man, he faced danger. Those who stayed within his self prescribed area went to the same places, followed the same routines, and knew what to expect from each other. New faces would appear from time to time, but they were either "transient," or they came to be "known" to the "residents" of the area. In Shorty's words, "familiarity it means a lot out here. You know, you're familiar with the area, the people and nature of the community."

At the end of the interview, Shorty gives a rather detailed description of his "living quarters." This is a description of what he previously had called his "cathole."

Q: **Now you said that you stayed...you shared a cabin with...**

Shorty: **With this other guy..um-hum**

Q: Your kind had...

Shorty: [not clear]....it was a ... it was a...it wasn't really a big house. It was a kinda of been a garage and ahh...we...we... found some old mattresses and some blankets and...and had it all laid out just like it was a little business...like we owned it. Matter of fact we know somebody else had came in and somebody else was in there, I'd be ready to fight. Hey, watcha doing in my house...you know....

Q: Um-hum

Shorty: so you need to get up and go where ever you need to go, but not in here...you know. And don't owned nothing...I don't owned a thing in here, but that's..that's the law of the streets. It's like a lot of times when the guys...these guys....I've slept in front of the labor pool and get high all night and don't want to go see Cat...and the labor...and...and...it's two o'clock in the morning; the labor pool opens at four and I want to be there to catch my ticket so ahh...you slept in front of the labor pool and..and you might sneak a certain person in front of the labor pool, but you got this other guy who sleeps in front of the labor pool every night and he sleep at that same place, you know. He's gone say something too. You know, you might find a blanket down there or a lil something to head with down there and sort of speaking, that's mine. Where you been here all day long. That's mine...I put...I leave it right there...and nobody bother it and everybody who stay up and notice that his...so you say, hey man gone with it...to keep confusion down. See.

There is present in the places and events to which Shorty links his story the idea of personal space. This includes the idea of "turf" or "my house," or my space. For Shorty, this was an out-building, possibly an old garage that was no longer used. He and his friend "claimed it," and because they claimed it, it was theirs. This is a standard way for people on the streets to live, or as Shorty says, this practice is supported by the "law of the streets." If he or his friend

were to come in and find someone else occupying the space, they would be "evicted." This "cathole" was Shorty's normal sleeping place. However, this was not the only place he slept. There was also the space in front of the labor pool.

When he has been doing drugs all night, he will often go sleep in front of the labor pool because its too late and he needs to be there by 4:00 a.m. But even there, space for sleep is claimed. He recognizes that if he sees a blanket, or other personal artifacts, this marks someone else's space, and he respects their right to have him move on, based on "the law of the streets."

"The law of the streets" is in effect a set of rules by which residents of the streets account for their behavior. As Shorty referenced "the law of the streets," he was speaking of a territorial claim, or a sense of "his turf." This transitory claim to an abandoned building or to a small piece of cement in front of the labor pool seems meager, but even more so in comparison to his linkages to horizons of "place," including friends and family, from a part of town where he felt a part and from a time when life was "good," or at least "better."

Shorty's horizon shifts again when he meets an old friend who recognized him and told him about the drug treatment program at this particular mission. From that time until the time of the interview, Shorty's gaze shifts from the world of drugs to the world of rehabilitation and the future and some hope.

Shorty: **Well, I done told ya'll about the drugs and the streets. I hope all that's in my past. An' I hop that next time I see you, I have a different story to tell. If this rehab works, maybe I will.**

Q: We hope so to, Shorty. Good luck and thanks for the interview.

Shorty: Maybe it'll help some other poor sucker from goin' down the same path.

Ronald

The sense of turf was not unique to Shorty, but was a theme shared by many of the men with whom I spoke. As the interview with Shorty showed, while his linkage to "turf" was specified in biographical linkages, his story was linked with the stories of others to the same theme. As I listened to "Ronald" this shared linkage of "turf" once again was prominent in his story, although biographically linked to the specifics of "his turf" that he protected as his own. Ronald lived under a major bridge that led to the downtown area. I met him in a nearby park and talked with him for over an hour. During the course of the conversation, another man, who was also identified as homeless, approached us and indicated that he would like to be a part of the conversation. Ronald, with angry words and gestures, indicated that he was not welcome. After the man had left, I asked Ronald why he had not permitted the man to participate in our conversation. Ronald reveals his reasons in the following excerpt from the conversation with him.

Q: Why did you do that?

Ronald: Do what?

Q: Run him off.

Ronald: Man, he's trouble.

Q: What do you mean that he's trouble?

Ronald: Well, it's this-a-way. You know, this is like my home. I mean, I sleep under the bridge, I come down here to the park. I go across the street to that store over there. I spend time walking down to the river. I mean, man, I'm bout all over the place. Well, guess what. The Prudential Building is right in the middle of the places I go. It's almost like it's a part of my home, or my territory.

Q: Your turf?

Ronald: Yeah, that's a good way to put it. My turf. Well, we don't bother nobody around here and nobody bothers us. We sleep where we want, we piss where we want, as long as nobody sees us doin' it [laughs], we drink beer down here, as long as nobody else is around. It's like our home. So we, we uh jus' claim it. And we take care of it. Now over to the Prudential Building, those folks don't want no panhandler comin' up to them and beggin' them for money to buy booze and drugs with. And if that was to happen, man the cops would be down here in a minute, and sure as shit, they'd think we had something to do with it, and then it'd all be up. Well, this dumb shit [referencing the man still in view but departing] he can't figure all this out, and he goes over to the Prudential Building and hits all these people who work there up for money, and then...

Q Does he do that often?

Ronald: Not now, he don't. I put a stop to it. Fact is, I spend lunch time, goin' to work time, gettin' off time, and most any time I can over there makin' sure he, and anybody else, don't come 'round that'll bother them folks.

Q: Sort of like a guard of sorts?

Ronald: I wouldn't say, no, it's more like a guardian angel [laughing]. They come an' go as they please and they don't even notice I'm around. But they protected from these bums. An' I sort of

guard the place and don't say nothin' to nobody bout it, cept those I run off.

Q: How long have you been doing this?

Ronald: Shit, I don't know. For a while. Maybe about four months. When I first got here, the uh the cops they come around and run me out from under the bridge twicet, and one of 'em tol' me that folks in these buildings don't like bein' bothered by beggin'. So I decided that I would just take care o' that right now. And Tony, the guy I jus' run off, he was hangin' over round the fountain, and I watched him headin' over toward the office buildings and I followed him. Now he don't hang around here. He jus comes over to the building to bum. So when he started bummin', I went up and told him to beat it, cause this is my place.

Q: Did he leave?

Ronald: At first he didn't. He said he been comin' roun for a long time. Then I made him know that he couldn't stay round here and stay healthy, and he finally agreed to leave. But he come aroun' some anyway.

Q: So you wern't too successful in getting him to leave on a permanent basis?

Ronald: I will be. This is my space.

Q: What did you do to make him know that he had to stay away?

Ronald: That's the thing that I know. [He laughs] And you know what? None of these people even know they got a guardian angel.

In this excerpt, Ronald claims his turf, but appears to disregard one of the basic tenets of the "law of the streets," as I had begun to understand it. I asked him whether or not he knew of the law of the streets, and he said that he did. I asked him to explain the apparent discrepancy to me. How could he move into

someone else's territory and occupy it, running the other person out in the process. He explained that you have to be "permanent" to have your space. This man wasn't permanent. He just drifted in and out of the territory. Ronald's claim to the turf derived from his "being permanent." To vacate a turf for any appreciable amount of time was tantamount to surrendering the rights to the turf.

George

There were many issues and concerns that were central in the construction of space by the respondents. Food was one of these. As seen with Shorty and other homeless people, some of these other issues included safety, comfort, familiarity with other homeless people, and in many ways, identity. Identity and the availability of an array of resources seemed central to George.

I met George, a well-dressed man in his late thirties, as I went into an all night diner. He approached me somewhat apologetically and wondered if I could let him have "a couple of bucks to buy some beer." This request seemed unusual in that rarely does one beg money so directly in order to buy beer. Noticing my hesitation, he explained something of his situation, and when I realized that he was homeless, I offered to buy him a meal. While we ate, he told me part of his story. He had been laid off from work when the firm for which he worked closed down. He was unable to find other work for a variety of reasons, among them being that he had difficulty getting along with the people with whom he interviewed. Soon after, as his money began to run low, he had

become homeless, or as he told me, it was almost an act of choice. Being somewhat depressed, and single, he had spent one night out on a park bench. As this was a pleasant experience, and not painful as he had thought it would be, he had done the same thing again the next night. Time went by and this became a way of life for him. He effectively abandoned his apartment and all of his belongings, and decided to become homeless.

As George and I talked, I began to recall one of my earlier methodological approaches, which was to have homeless people take photographs of their world. I repeated this approach with George and asked him to take photographs of meaningful places with a disposable camera and return them to me for developing. My plan was for a second conversation during which he could interpret the photos. When I had the photographs developed, I was surprised to see images of ponds, a golf course, restaurants, banks, bars, a church, and a service station, among other things. I invited one of my students who was curious about homeless people to go with me and conduct the interview regarding the pictures. I allowed him to use the interview as a part of a term project for one of his classes. We met George at the same twenty-four hour restaurant at which I had originally met him. He told us his story through his interpretation of the photographs.

The following is a series of selected excerpts from his interpretations. As George blends them together, they make visible a narrative within a narrative as he weaves together different strands, artfully constructing his life as he

represents it to us in the interview. As we began our conversation, George was quick to point out that he had spent a long time in finding a place with all the needed resources so handily available. We produced the photographs, and George interpreted each one. In this interview, there is an overall theme in George's story: By constructing place, both physical and social, through the photographs, and his narrative built upon them, George portrays a life of a person who is carefree and living off of the fruit of the land. If one listens more closely to his comments, however, it becomes apparent that George looks back on places and events that form horizons of meaning, the sum total of which converge to show a conflicted person who has not come to terms with his homelessness, or some of the underlying reasons for it.

The Pond

The first picture is a simple photograph of a pond. It is located not far from an apartment complex, which may be seen in the background of the picture. There are, interestingly enough, two ducks in the picture, a fact that becomes relevant later in this chapter. As George looks at the photograph, he continues his narrative.

George: This is where I go to read. It's nice. Real nice. This is next to these apartments [points to apartments in the background], but it doesn't have anything to do with them. I never get hassled here. I come over and sit and read. Nothing to worry about, nobody to bother me. Now, over here [points off to right side of the picture], is the number 7 hole on the golf course. So I don't like to sit here at the same time I like to play golf, cause people get to noticing you and then they recognize

you, you know. So, I sit here on the weekends, Sunday, or maybe Saturday. It's like my den, you know. my reading room. And sometimes, when nobody's around, I sit on the edge, right over here, and put my feet in the water.

As depicted through his narration of his story surrounding the photograph of this pond, the listener is placed squarely in the midst of his domain. George looks across a literal horizon to a golf course and its environs where he won't be "hassled." As he looks to this part of his life, he meticulously organizes his day and locale so that he is not observed as a suspected homeless person by those who might see him playing golf. This careful orchestration is characteristic of George in any conversation I have had with him. From his present perspective, he typifies himself in this portion of the interview as a person who spends much time alone. As his story moves to include other perspectives, this does not always ring true of other dimensions of his life.

A Bench by the Pond

The second picture around that he tells his story is of a park bench located against the background of shrubs that look to be azaleas.

George: Yep, this is the bench. I started to take a picture of my chick sittin' right here on this bench, but I didn't want anybody you'd show these pictures to...to see her either. So I just took a picture of the bench and left the rest to your imagination.

Q: You have a girlfriend?

George: Yeah. She's good lookin' too. She comes camping with me sometimes.

- Q: Does she have housing, like an apartment, or house? Or is she homeless?
- George: She lives with her sister. I hate her sister. She's a real bitch. Thinks she's better than everybody. Not just me. Everybody.
- Q: She won't let you stay over there?
- George: No. Not really. Sometimes, when her sister's over at her boyfriend's house, I stay over, but that's not very often.
- Q: Does she work?
- George: Who, my girlfriend or her sister?
- Q: Your girlfriend.
- George: Yeah, she works. She does telemarketing. She's a student over at UNF, too. What are you guys looking like that? Can't I have a girlfriend?
- Q: Yeah, that's ok. I just wonder why you don't stay with her, or why you and her don't get a place together?
- George: When I get to working again, or when she gets a better job, we might. But right now, we're makin' it just like this. Maybe someday things will change. Right now, I'm not really ready to settle down again,
- Q: Again? You been married before.
- George: Not married, but I lived with a chick for about four years. Didn't work out. Maybe I'm not the type to be in relationships. About the time I find somebody that really likes me, I get tired of them. I just like my freedom, I guess. That's me! I'm a wanderer. That's why I live like I do. A little camping. A little begging. No roots. Yep. That's me.

There are three separate stories of self that George is weaving together in this part of the interview. There is the side that has a girlfriend, but with whom

he can't live because of her sister. He deploys this same side to talk about his inability to obtain jobs because he "can't get along with those personnel types...who don't know much anyway." From a psychological perspective, this self is focusing on "the other" as the source of his problems. George is victim of unfortunate encounters with people who are themselves maladjusted. The second story is of George, the wanderer, the one who is a free spirit and cannot be tied down. This side of George is seen in a four year relationship with a woman, but when he discovers that she is interested in a long term relationship with him, he loses interest in her. The third story centers around our perceived incredulity at his having a girlfriend. This is a defended self that is always wary lest his story not be taken seriously. These stories do not fade away or die, but are continued as George develops them throughout the interview.

A Short Order Steak Restaurant

We next turned to a photograph of a short order steak restaurant that was located near the all night diner at which I had first met George. Without prompting, George resumed his interpretation.

George: And this is another restaurant I eat at. They always have some food they're going to throw away, and I do them little favors and they give me food. This is my favorite place to eat. I eat there every chance I get. The only problem is that I have to go there just before closing time, and most of the time, I can't make it then.

Q: Why not?

George: Sometimes I'm over at my girlfriend's apartment, sometimes I'm dirty, and sometimes I'm just out walking or doing something else. You know. It's not always convenient. But if I'm there at the right time, I get a good meal. Salad bar, steak, coffee. Hell, you can't beat that. I mean, what else they going to do with it? Put it in the garbage? They feed me, and still throw enough stuff away to feed twenty guys. And it makes them feel good to help somebody. You know. We both win. I kind of view it like where I live. I live in left-over spaces. Spaces nobody else is using. And I don't tear stuff up. And here, I help out a little. You know, my whole life is lived on other people's left-overs. I use the golf course when nobody else is using it. I use the bathroom at the service station over here when there's not much traffic, and not much demand for it. I eat the leftovers, well not leftovers, but stuff that's probably going to go bad if I don't eat it, over at the Waffle House. I eat there when I eat late at night.

Q: You don't go hungry very often, do you?

George: Not really. I actually eat pretty well. Last month, or month before last, I had to go on a diet. My pants were getting tight, and it was cheaper going on a diet than to buy new pants. Left-overs, man. You could feed every homeless man, woman, and child in this town on left-overs.

As George comments on this picture, he adds another story to what he has already begun to tell. This story is about George, who doesn't just beg for food, but provides services in order to earn it. In this way, they (he and the restaurant staff) both win. They feel good and he proves his self sufficiency by providing services in return for his food.

But George goes further. He tells how his entire life is lived on other's leftovers. There is within all of this a picture of a kind of wisdom. From this perspective, this is a reasonable thing to do, using left over space, left over golf time, left over food, all of which are being put to good use. Through this

narrative, George constructs a sufficiently wise picture of himself, sufficiently well taken care of, that he does one more immanently reasonable thing: he goes on a diet. This is more reasonable than spending all of his money, which we didn't realize at this point in time that he had, to buy new clothes.

When George links his present life to the experience of living on the residuals of other's lives in this part of the interview, he begins the presentation of a moral self. From this moral perspective, every homeless man, woman, and child could be fed from left-overs, if only the broader society had the wisdom to develop policies and programs to do so. In light of his later self presentations, George becomes somewhat didactic as he begins to "teach" us the meaning of life gained from his linkage to the experiential events that comprise the horizons of meaning to which he links his present situation. Later, as George will continue his story, wisdom will be combined with compassion and morality.

The "Shrink's" Office

The next picture that George used to mediate the self he was constructing was of the facade of an office that was located in an office park. The door to the office was located on a portico and the office in general seemed to have the trappings of a successful business or professional venture, as it included parked cars in front that suggested affluence. The student was taken aback by the picture, as may be heard in his first question.

Q: **What's this, your office? [Laughing]**

George: No, that's my shrink's office.

Q: Shrink's office?

George: Yeah. I go see her about once a week, usually. I really am trying to get my head on straight.

Q: How do you pay for that?

George: Right now, she's running a tab on me. When I first started seeing her, I still had insurance. I wasn't supposed to, but I did, and they paid for it till they caught up with me. They tried to make me pay back what they had paid for about six months, but you can't get money out of a homeless man, right? Anyways, when I ran out of insurance, she started running a tab on me. If I can't pay her, she'll write it off. She says it's worth it. She thinks I'm interesting. I think she secretly wants my body. [laughs]

This is not an ingredient in the story of a person who typifies homelessness. There is something decidedly middle class in this part of the story about George having a therapist, whom he sees once a week. George has highlighted this with a picture of her office, which is housed in a relatively exclusive office park. George's life story is woven together even more completely as he portrays briefly his relationship with his "shrink." While he speaks of his relationship as "trying to get my head on straight," this is not the typical therapist-client relationship. The particulars of this part of the story are another instance in which George's life is woven together with that of another person, notably a female, and is portrayed as a quid pro quo. The therapist is not doing therapy for free, as a charity, but she also gains from it. As George tells the story of his relationship with the therapist, he carefully includes the

statement that she is running a tab for him, and he portrays her as having some unusual interest in him. This interest is possibly a strictly professional one, but, in his depiction, George portrays it as being more, suggesting that she may have a romantic, or sexual, interest in him. As George relates this part of the narrative, his sense of self is enhanced as a male and as middle class, reinforcing the theme of his story that his lifestyle is one of choice as much as of necessity. This leaves him with a sense of dignity and self worth.

The Telephone Booth

On the edge of a parking lot of a short order restaurant, and located out of the way and approximately 30 yards from the restaurant itself, stood a lone telephone booth. This was the content of the next photograph, and yielded more of George's story.

Q: This is a picture of the telephone booth, right? Or does the telephone booth just happen to be in the picture?

George: No it's the telephone booth. That's where I make my phone calls. And if I need for somebody to return a call, I get them to call me back at a certain time, and I just go and hang there til they call. That way, I can stay in touch with the world, like my girlfriend, or my shrink, or my bank, or my family, or whatever. And there's not much to fight about here when I'm waiting for somebody to return a call. Probably not more than ten or fifteen people use the thing in a week, so again, it's kind of like leftover time.

Q: Where were you raised?

George: Orlando. Some times in Daytona. Momma lives in Orlando, my Dad lives in Daytona.

Q: You ever see them?

George: Yeah, but not much.

Q: About how often?

George: Not any more than I can help.

Q: You don't get along with them?

George: **Shit no! They think I'm crazy as hell. They had me Baker acted. That's how I started seeing the shrink. Anyway, I don't want to talk about them.**

As George narrates the story regarding the phone booth, he depicts himself as not being deprived of the everyday necessities of life, including the telephone. Again, he draws on the story of himself as being wise and judicious in his use of resources. He can lay claim to the telephone at times when its use is limited and thereby maintain contact with those with whom he needs to stay in touch. In the course of the conversation about the phone booth, the issue of family resurfaces. George mentions nothing about siblings, but he does reference his mother and father. In interpreting this scene, he draws on one of his earlier narratives of self to depict himself as being a victim of others' malicious intentions toward him in order to explain the present estrangement between himself and his parents. His mother and father, for reasons unknown, had him "Baker acted," which is involuntary commitment to a mental health facility for evaluation for mental illness. However, George remains able to portray himself as judicious and valued in the face of their lack of kindness

toward him. As he tells this story of his relationship with his parents, he links the eventual outcome of their actions to his becoming a patient of his "shrink."

A Branch Bank

It was no secret that, as George stopped at the next photograph, we were both surprised. The photograph pictured the branch bank at which I did my banking business, and with which the student was obviously familiar.

Q: O.K. Your bank, right?

George: Sure. Don't you have a bank? Sure you do. Well, so do I. Where else am I going to keep my money?

Q: You have money? How much money do you have? I mean this may be kind of nosey, but you are homeless, and you don't work.

George: I told you I get a check once a month. It's direct deposited to the bank. I have an ATM card, so I can get it out whenever I want it.

Q: So how much money do you have in the bank? If you don't mind me asking.

George: I've got enough. I could live pretty well for a while if I wanted to. For maybe six or seven months. And I give my girlfriend some money sometimes. And sometimes, I spend some of it on myself. I have a CD, a savings account, and a checking account. And I have a safety deposit box. To keep my important stuff in. You know, like my insurance policy, a couple of rings, my will. What's the matter? You look surprised. Or should I say shocked?

Q: I am. Shit, I don't have all that, and my old man's got plenty of money.

George: I get a check once a month. It's not really enough to live off of, but if I live like this then I can save it. And I can stay a little ahead. See, what you don't understand is that being homeless is just a different lifestyle. I'm living on what other people don't want, or using things when other people aren't using them. You know, left-overs. I'm pretty resourceful.

George tells the story of his bank as a part of the narrative construction of his own life as not being impoverished. While there is no indication of where a check comes from each month, he assures us that there is one that is directly deposited into a bank account, and that he withdraws it via an ATM card. Through this narrative, as he tells of having a CD, a safety deposit box, and a savings account, as well as his checking account with the ATM card, George again presents himself as middle class in many ways. In this story, homelessness is portrayed as simply an alternative lifestyle, not necessarily worse, or impoverished; only different. George then goes on to note some of the contents of his safety deposit box, adding to the imagery of himself as a middle class person, with important belongings, such as an insurance policy, a couple of rings, and a will. As George weaves together his image of himself, he again portrays himself as living off of what others don't want, or what is left over. This adds to the other stories in which George depicts himself as being resourceful and is a variant on the wisdom and reasonableness presented in other constructions. But this time he goes further. George stories himself as being thrifty, in that he saves a little, and gets ahead. And having some excess funds, he is likewise able to be a generous person, at times giving to his girlfriend. In

telling the story of his life and his finances, George again draws on the defended self, which he earlier depicted, as he compares himself to us, noting our being shocked at his monetary possessions.

An Upscale Restaurant and Bar

Approximately a mile from the fast food restaurant where I met him was a restaurant and bar that catered to business and professional people. It had the reputation in the area of being one of "*the* places to meet." A photograph of this restaurant and bar stood out significantly among the other photographs.

George's narrative was just as significant.

George: And this one here's one of the bars I go to.

Q: You go to the bar. And what do you trade for drinks?

George: Nothing. That's one of the places I spend my own money. I get dressed up and go down there, sip on a couple or three drinks for a while, talk to some folks, and then come back home.

Q: And how do they react to your being homeless?

George: They don't. They don't know I'm homeless. I get dressed up pretty good, and they think I'm just one more working stiff that's stopped by for a night cap. And sometimes I have some pretty good conversations.

Q: Where do they think you work?

George: The ones that ask don't think I work. Sometimes I tell them I'm retired, live on a pension. Which is true. I just don't tell them how much. One guy offered me a job as a salesman, but I didn't take it. I probably come across like a salesman, but I'm not cut out for that shit. You have to lie to do that, and I may do a lot of things, but I don't lie. And I don't like unloading

shit on somebody else just to get their money so that I can make a living. I'd rather just ask them for money, and if they want to give it, they do, and if they don't, they don't. No games played. And besides, how could I do what I wanted to do if I had to work all the time for a living. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not lazy, I just like to do what I want to do, and living like I live is a small price to pay, at least for a while.

Q: And what kinds of things do you do?

George: Read, think, write poetry, draw, or sketch, play golf, walk, think. You know, kind of an armature philosopher, almost like yourselves.

Q: Goddam, man. You're unreal.

George: [laughing] What do ya mean?

Q: Shit, I don't know.

George: Oh, well.

George narrates himself in this frame in still another variation of earlier themes as he portrays how he gets dressed up, goes to the bar as a "normal" working person, and spends his own money. Note the drama of self presentation in this portion of the narrative (Goffman, 1959). George pointedly does not reveal his homeless condition, but intentionally denies it, drawing on a formerly narrated self to present himself through demeanor, his dress and his paying for his drinks in such a way that he is perceived as "just one more working stiff that's stopped by for a night cap." As a patron of the bar who is a working man, George is able to have good conversations with other bar patrons. Through these stories, which also shape the way we perceive him, George further constructs himself as middle class.

At this point in his story, George returns to another prior narrative, that of the differing arenas in which his worth is affirmed by others' responses to him. He tells of a person who offers him a job as a salesman. However, this variant of the story adds a further ingredient--nobility. While he thinks that he is likely perceived as a "salesman," the one thing that differentiates him from that profession is his unwillingness to lie. George portrays himself as being unwilling to dishonestly "unload shit on somebody else just to get their money so that I can make a living." Nobly, he would prefer simply asking them for money, and accept it if they want to give it, but doesn't feel offended if they don't.

Lest we consider him lazy, however, George is quick to add still another narrative component to this presentation of himself. He is making a choice to do what he wants to do, to be a free agent in the world. As he catalogs the things he likes to do, he summarizes himself as being a contemplative person, "a kind of amature philosopher." This designation, overtly comparing himself to his understanding of the student and myself, again locates him in a peer relationship to us, and cloaks his homelessness in dimensions that are all but unrecognizable.

Cooking

As if to conclude on a note that was more in line with what might be expected, George highlighted a picture of himself kneeling by a campfire and cooking a meal. From all appearances, this might well have been someone on a

vacation or fishing trip preparing an evening meal. Not surprisingly, George utilizes this photograph to elaborate more of the meaning and significance of homelessness in conventional social terms.

George: And here I am, cooking a meal.

Q: How did you take this picture of yourself. The camera that John gave you doesn't have a self timer on it, does it?

George: Who said I took the picture myself?

Q: Well, who took it?

George: My girlfriend, man. My girlfriend. You still don't believe I have a girlfriend, do you?

Q: Well, it's just that you're not what I expected to find when I agreed to help out on this homeless project.

George: You're a college man, right.

Q: Right.

George: Then you know what a stereotype is, right.

Q: Point made.

George: The problem with the world is that people deal with other people as "types." Not real individuals, just "types." And so you divide the world up all neat and nice, and it's comfortable for you, but you don't see real people. You just see what you want to see. Now when I decided to go homeless, I realized that I had to try to figure each person out. Not that I always do, but I do enough to find out how to approach them if I'm going to get money from them, or food, or whatever. And most of the time, I realize that everybody's different. They're not "types." Now if I ever go back to school, I'm going to major in psychology and I figure I'll be way ahead of the curve. That's enough of that, but do you see what I mean?

Q: Yeah, I do. But that's hard. We have to learn what types people are, because we can't get to know them all individually.

George: You just gotta listen, man, you gotta listen. And if you listen, you'll see people instead of types. What's the next picture?

As we approached this picture, although it was not the final picture in the interview, George reaches the climax of his own self presentation. But prior to that, he again references the defended and wary self, making sure his story is believed in general, but here, primarily vis a vis the girlfriend.

In this final section of the narrative, George elaborates and expands the narrative of the philosopher-self, and becomes the teacher, imparting answers to what he perceives to be one of the major problems in the world, that of stereotyping people. This is a very personal narrative in the sense that, once one hears the stories with which George has depicted himself earlier in his narrative, he now concludes from his own narrative linkages that whatever pain he suffers in his homeless condition is attributable to the stereotyping of homeless people in general. He is convinced that if people would but listen to each other, then the problem of depersonalizing people would be rectified. This he no doubt would say would be of an enormous benefit to homeless people.

Tommy's Folk

One of the members of "the research team" I had recruited from homeless, and formerly homeless, men, Tommy, was the unofficial team leader. In this position, Tommy accompanied me on most of the forays that I and my students, or other members of the research team, made into the streets. When,

in the course of all of our interactions, he shared his perceptions with me, Tommy brought to the conversations and the interviews a different perspective, that of one who had "shared the streets" with its members for some long number of years. His interviews, more than those of the other members of the "team," had the quality of a conversation between and among homeless people. In my early efforts to train homeless people to make photographs of their world, I asked members of my research team to take pictures of familiar sights and then tell me about these views when we viewed the photographs they had taken. Tommy volunteered to do this, and again, saw events and people in ways that others, including myself, would not see.

Tommy was the subject of the next two interviews. They develop two themes that add to the understanding of place among the homeless--survival in a competitive world of rats and privacy. After Tommy's pictures were developed, he and I sat in a conference room where he handed me the pictures and I began to glance through them. I was doing this quickly, and not paying a lot of attention to each photograph. The photographs of two subjects were the focus of our conversation.

The Van Man

For some homeless people, home is a context in which their autonomy and sense of privacy were left in tact. Tommy had talked earlier about a man and his wife who lived in a van. In looking at the photographs, Tommy called my

attention to a van with a man walking toward it. This was the man whom Tommy had previously referenced. The van was parked in the parking lot of the shelter. Tommy talked about the couple who lived in the van and their "space." This is a part of Tommy's interpretation of the homeless world, and indicates again the variation of sleeping spaces that people who are homeless utilize.

Tommy: That's th' guy. Him and his wife live out of their van right there.

Q: Where did you take the picture, back there in the parking lot? Do they park it there a lot?

Tommy: Yes sir.

Q: How old a fella is he?

Tommy: About 36 or 37.

Q: Now he has a lot of belongings in there, does he ever stay down here at the mission?

Tommy: Only once in while, but they'd rather sleep in the van.

Q: Why do they stay in the van? Why don't they just stay in the mission?

Tommy: I don't know. He say they jus want to stay together. They not able to do that inside the mission. An another thing. They always fraid somebody'll steal their stuff.

Q: Do they have children?

Tommy: Naw, they ain't got no children. It's jus the two of um. They don't have much to do with folks roun' here either. Jus stay to themselves.

- Q:** What's the difference between staying in the van and staying in a house or an apartment? I mean, isn't that kind of like having a home?
- Tommy:** Yeah, in a way it is. But in a way, it ain't. See, let me tell you what, Mr. Talmage, they homeless. That ain't no house. They ain't got no place of they own to park it. The police run 'em off when they park on the streets. So they pendent on the mission, or somethin like dat to let um park. An they ain't got no money for food. They gets their food from the mission or from the soup kitchens. They kinda like a turtle with their house on their back, cept they can't live by themselves like a turtle. They pendent on the missions.
- Q:** Do they park it wherever they can?
- Tommy:** Yeah, He came over from Job Corp, homeless. He gave up on Job Corp and came here.
- Q:** How long had he been in Job Corp, do you know?
- Tommy:** About 2 years. Got no GED, no nothing, then he came here. He's going to get a GED right now.
- Q:** Why'd he give up on the job corps?
- Tommy:** I ain't sure. Probably cause of drugs.
- Q:** Are they on drugs?
- Tommy:** Probably so. They looks like they is. They countenance shows it. They bof in the program. That's probably another reason they stays in the van. Cause they gots privacy to do what mens and womens do and cause they can do their drugs.
- Q:** So he's working here. Is he going to stay up here?
- Tommy:** Going to stay on the program.

The couple in the van, despite their homeless state, still desire privacy.

However, being unemployed, and with no permanent residence, they are forced

to rely on the mission to some degree. They eat there and they participate in the program of the mission. However, they have no conventional access to privacy (Pastalan, 1970). There are no accommodations for couples in the mission, married or unmarried, and there are rules against both married and unmarried couples staying together. This couple recognizes the rules of the mission, and they own a van. The one way they are able to sleep together is to stay in their van. They resolve their dilemma by living in their van, parking it in the parking lot of the mission, and utilizing the other resources of the mission. One reason they are able to do this is because they have no children.

The desire for privacy is a pervasive concern among homeless people. In conducting interviews, respondents were reluctant to be interviewed at times because there was no place that was private. Angel slept in the bushes in a park, but awoke early to avoid others. Others slept in abandoned buildings. Still others staked out "turf" as a way of establishing "place," if not privacy. In this sense, the desire for "place" was as much to achieve some sense of privacy as for other reasons. The theme of privacy, or lack of it, continues to be a major theme among homeless people.

But Tommy gives other reasons for the couple staying in the van. One reason is that they are afraid of other people stealing their material possessions, whatever those may be. Again, fear of others is a common theme among homeless people, and will be explored in depth in the next chapter.

Another rationale Tommy offers for the couple living in the van is that they "appear" to be on drugs. Tommy links this conjecture to their being in the program at the mission, which includes a form of drug treatment. This gives them access to food and other resources that the mission has to offer without giving up their private space. Further, to be participants in a drug program is a way for them to gain access to these resources, while maintaining the facade of "getting off drugs."

This is admittedly Tommy's perspective, but it illustrates the way linkage to themes, or horizons, shapes the interpretation of events.

The Rat Man

As we continued looking through the remainder of the photographs, I saw a variety of pictures of different people standing up against buildings, sitting on curbs, or walking down sidewalks. There were also extraneous pictures of a dumpster, and other assorted scenes. As Tommy watched me looking through the pictures somewhat hurriedly, he told me that I was missing something. He then picked out three pictures and placed them in sequence. The first photograph was of a dumpster that was behind a restaurant approximately one and a half blocks from the mission. The second picture was of a man, standing against a wall. The third picture was of a large rat crossing an asphalt parking lot. Then Tommy explained the series of photographs to me.

Tommy: **See dis picture right here? Dat's de dumpster up der on de corner. When I was walkin' by it I heard dis great big motion**

inside, so I stopped to look inside, and when I did, I saw dis here man [points to a second picture] wid a broken mop handle, an he was tryin' to kill dis rat [points to the third picture of a rat crossing an asphalt parking lot.] Now dis man, he don stay in no mission, but jus in de parks and empty buildings near here. You know, dat's a shame ain't it, when a man got to fight a rat cause he fraid de rat gon get his food. See, when mens get homeless, sometime day gets to be like de rats mo dan dey be like a man. An dey has to fight de rats an other animals fo dey food. Now dis man know dat dey food in de dumpster, an he gon get it any time he can, but de rat know dat too, an he gon try to get de food, so dey's a conflict 'tween em fo de food. I knows what dis is like, cause I done been der too.

One of the sources of food that is available to homeless people is dumpsters, which may be located near shelters, restaurants, or other places where food is served daily. In those dumpsters is to be found a ready supply of food that is reasonably fresh. But, as Tommy notes, the rats know this too. Tommy understands this event as nothing more or less than the man defending his food source against the incursion of the rat. From the picture of the rat being taken after the episode was complete, it was clear to Tommy that the rat had escaped to threaten the man's food resources another day. Tommy's perspective, which he brought to this event, enabled him to see a struggle where I had difficulty comprehending it, even as Tommy narrated the story. As Tommy noted, he had also eaten out of dumpsters. Thus, through his own biographical linkage to those events in his own life in which dumpsters were a resource for food, the events to which he links the experience of homelessness fall not only on the experience of the man in the dumpster, and on others who seek food in

dumpsters, but includes his own experience and demonstrate the shared theme of the extremes to which some homeless people go in search of food.

Bub

One of the happiest and most content person I met among these homeless respondents was a man named Bub. One afternoon, Tommy accompanied me to again explore the world of the streets. One of our stops was a local park, where we watched people fish from a retaining wall on the river. One of those fishing was also humming a spiritual softly as he cast into the river. We stood next to him to watch him fish. When we first began the conversation with him, we had no indication that he was homeless. He asked for a cigarette, and we gave him one. From that point on, we engaged in periodic conversation. Eventually, he said that he usually fished at night, but that when he hunted he usually slept at night and hunted during the daytime. I asked him to explain this. In the course of his story, he told of his wife leaving him while he was sick and out of work, and how he had been evicted from his rented home a little over a year prior to our conversation. Tommy asked him if he were homeless now, and he said that some people might consider him homeless? Beyond that, he didn't answer. Then Tommy asks him:

Tommy: **This how you eat? Fishing?**

Bub: **Yeah, and other ways. I gets plenty to eat.**

Tommy: **How else you gon eat when you out here?**

- Bub: [laughing] Lots a ways. When I was a chile in school, I learned me a thing or two. I learned how dem folks long time ago got their food.
- Tommy: How they do that, I mean, like you gone do the same thing?
- Bub: They tol' me bout the hunters and gatherers, and I members when I was in Viet Nam, how I had to do the same thing. So now I jus do the same thing.
- Tommy: You hunts for food? How you do that?
- Bub: [Pulls a slingshot from his pocket] You see this? If they gets within bout 20, 25 feet a me, they dead.
- John: What do you hunt?
- Bub: Mostly ducks.
- Tommy: You means you shoots ducks wid dat and kills em? Where'd you get that thing anyway?
- Bub: Got it at a, you uhh...know.. uh..one of dem sports stores. I knowed I used to be good with these things when I had been a child, but now I reckoned how I could use it to eat. So, I got it, an I started huntin fo my food. Yeah, I sho did. [laughs]
- Tommy: Now how you gon hunt for food with a slingshot? I talked with a lots of homeless and I never heard one of em say they went hunting for food. Specially not with no slingshot.
- Bub: But dat's what I do. I go huntin fo lotsa my food. Fishin' an huntin' an gatherin'.
- Tommy: How you hunts ducks wid a slingshot, man?
- Bub: You see dat duck? Ef he get close enough to me, den I hits him wid one of dese. [pulls a smooth rock from his pocket which is between 3/4" and 1" in diameter] Hits him right in de head, mos a da time, an knock im clean out. Den I takes dis [pulls a large pocket knife from his pocket] an I cuts his head off, den I cooks him an eats him.

Tommy: Where you cook im at?

Bub: Sometime back to my camp. Sometime at the parks where they got places to cook, an sometime I jus build a fire down by the railroad track, or over by a ol warehouse. I got what I need to cook him...tensils an plates an things, an sometime I got more to eat than I can eat...so, uh...so, sometime, I asts somebody else dat I know to eat some. [laughs again] Yeah, man, dat's what I do.

John: What else do you eat?

Bub: Fish. Lotsa fish. An I eats vegetables what I gets when dey throws em away at the grocery sto outa d' dumpster. An sometime day jus gives em to me fo dey throws em away.

During the time that Bub was talking, I began to recollect what many people knew as the duck pond across the river, and how some people in the neighborhood had been wondering what had happened to all of the ducks. At this point in the conversation, I began to have some idea as to what may have been their fate, and it didn't include the ducks being run over by cars, as some of the people in that neighborhood had thought. So I continued the question.

John: You hunt for ducks, huh? Where all do you go hunting?

Bub: All over, man. All over town. Deys lots a ducks roun dis town.

John: Do you ever go hunting across the river?

Bub: Yes sir, man. All over.

John: Do you ever go down to the duck pond over in what they call San Marco?

Bub: To de duck pon over yonder, over here, all over. Sometime I go to Confederate Park, you know dat's downtown, sho do.

- Tommy: You de one dat been eatin' de ducks up in Confederate Park? [laughs]
- Bub: One of em. Dey's another fella what hunt em too. We bof get em in Confederate Park. De las thing I done got up yonder was a big goose.
- John: Goose? You ate the goose? [other respondents had previously commented on the sudden disappearance of the resident gray goose]
- Bub: Yessir. I had goose fo bout three days.
- John: What else do you hunt?
- Bub: Snakes, squirrels, sometime rabbits, possums, an sometime dogs an ca...
- John: Wait a minute, Bub. I don't want to hear about any dogs and cats.
- Bub: [laughing] Why not, man. Dey eats em over der in Nam, an China, an Korea, an all dem places. What wrong wid dat?
- John: Nothing...How do you know you're not eating... No I don't want to hear any more about the dogs and cats.

Recollections of childhood education and experiences in Viet Nam are the experiential realities to which Bub's links his present ability to survive as a modern day hunter and gatherer. Suspending the norms of the current cultural melieu in the interest of his own survival, as the moral order is suspended elsewhere, Bub begins to recount the slaughter, cooking, and eating of domestic animals. This was a bit too much for me, however, and I redirected his conversation to other forms of food. Soon thereafter, Tommy focused the conversation on Bub's place of sleep.

- Tommy: Where do you sleep? And where do you stay most of the time?
- Bub: I mostly stays on de other side of de river, but I comes over here sometimes.
- Tommy: You ever go down to de missions or shelters?
- Bub: No, I don't do dat. Don't do dat.
- Tommy: Not even when it cold?
- Bub: Not den either. See, I stays close to where I can get food. I can sleep anywhere, but I can't get no food jus anywhere. Mostly I stay on the other side of the river, but sometime I come over here jus fo a little difference. Now I got me a camp over on de other side where I can stay, but I don't stay dere all de time, cause I don't like to get locked in to no place permanent like.
- Tommy: Where you keep yo stuff?
- Bub: I keep it in my bag. See dat bag der? [he points to a duffle bag about 30 feet away, sitting next to his bicycle] Dats where I keeps it. I jus carries it wid me.
- John: Bub, how long have you been homeless? Or do you think of yourself as homeless?
- Bub: You want to know the truth? Hell no, I ain't homeless. I live out here in the good Lawd's world with all his creatures, and I eats the food he sends my way.

Like Tommy's pictures of "the rat man," or many of the other homeless people, Bub constructs place by access to resources for obtaining food, albeit different resources from "the rat man." Once he constructs place, he sees it as his place, and feels at home in it. The "food," if it is on the streets or in the woods, and not locked up, is fair game. Unlike many other homeless people,

Bub locates himself in a world of his making and he is at ease in it. As he looks back across the contours of his life, he has seen good times and bad times. The time of the interview, a time of homelessness, is not one of his "bad times," for he has constructed the world as his place, and within it, he is home.

CHAPTER 5 SCARED TO DEATH

When homeless people tell the stories of their lives, it is convenient, for analytical purposes, to see specifically how they link their stories to temporal and spatial horizons in separate accounts. However, in the lived world of the streets, there is no clear delineation between the temporal and spatial horizons of meaning. Inevitably, these two dimensions of social worlds are linked together at specific spatio-temporal crossroads. Events occur at particular points in time, but they also occur at particular places. This characterizes these two dimensions in both the domiciled and the homeless world.

While homelessness may be understood as placelessness, and as it may be seen as occurring in a different temporal order, the lives of homeless people can only be understood when the temporal and spatial are considered together. These dimensions include a range of temporal and spatial themes, but they occur concurrently. Such an understanding is embedded in the accounts that homeless people give when they speak of fear as a vivid horizon of meaning for their everyday lives. In the accounts that follow, each person links his or her present life to some understanding of the past as fearful. This fear has derived

from certain harmful or damaging experiences, and has been utilized to present their present lives in the narrative interviews.

Henry

Sid, one of my students, and I met Henry in Confederate Park where he was feeding the ducks some scraps of bread. He later told us that these were left from sandwiches that had been handed out by "some church group." Henry is in his early to mid forties. He is outgoing and articulate, and likes to talk. He is a veteran of the navy, and is not only homeless, but sees this as his permanent lifestyle. I had seen him on another occasion, but at that time he had been too inebriated to talk. On this occasion, which was a sunny afternoon, Henry initiated the conversation, and commented on the beauty of the day. After we exchanged pleasantries, he asked us what we were doing in the park, and if we came here often. We explained that we were doing research on the ways homeless people looked at the world, and he volunteered to be interviewed since, as he said, he was a typical homeless man. Early in the interview, the tape recorder malfunctioned; from that point on, both the student and I took notes, from which we later reconstructed the interview. We asked him first to tell us about his life.

Q: Henry, can you tell me about yourself? Your life?

Henry: I mean, man, they ain't nothin' much to tell. I grew up here in Jacksonville, then I joined the navy. Then after I got out, I got married. No, first my girlfriend got pregnant, and then I got married. No, before that, I got a job down at the shipyards.

- Q: What was your job?
- Henry: Weldin'. Same as I did in the navy.
- Q: How long did you work in the shipyards?
- Henry: Umm, let me think. Bout six years. No, bout eight. Cause I was thirty two when I left.
- Q: Why did you leave?
- Henry: Well, I didn't zactly jus' leave. I was, you know, told to leave.
- Q: Why did they ask you to leave? Did they downsize?
- Henry: No, they didn't downsize. They didn't do nothin'. I jus got fired. They caught me drinkin' on th job. They say torches an booze don't mix too good. [laughs]
- Henry: Well, I worked some construction jobs. I painted some.
- Q: What was your regular work?
- Henry: I never got no mo reglar work. Das de las reglar job I had.
- Q: You still married?
- Henry: Naw man. She done lef me long time ago. She been married three times since then! Least that's what I heard. Maybe mo since then.
- Q: Do you ever see her? Or your child?
- Henry: Naw. She never would let me see the baby.
- Q: Why not?
- Henry: Cause, she say if I can't pay her, I can't see the baby. And I can't get no job, so I just don't see 'em. So dat lil baby all growed up now an' I don't even know who she is.
- Q: Is that why y'all separated, because you didn't have work?

Henry: Yeah, dat and cause I was drinkin so much.

Q: Is that when you became homeless?

Henry: When?

Q: When you and your wife broke up?

Henry: No. I came homeless when I los my room in a house over here in Springfield. Couldn't find no work. Din' ha no money. Couldn't pay my rent. Los my room. Been homeless ever since.

Q: How long has that been?

Henry: I'm not sure. I'd say bout 8-10 years. Maybe a lil more.

We asked Henry about being married. This was often an issue with many of the homeless men with whom we spoke as some of them had remained legally married, or at least knew nothing about being divorced, even though they may have been estranged or separated for some number of years. Some had found out later that they had been divorced by their wives. Many had never been married.

As Henry recalls, and then paints with broad strokes, the outlines of his life, he speaks repeatedly and consistently about the reasons for the loss of his job and the breakup of his home. He links the experiences of these losses to alcohol abuse. While other homeless people are frequently not as candid as Henry, the story he tells draws very much on shared linkages with others to similar histories of difficulty in dealing with substance abuse.

As we talked, Henry's story centered around his drinking, and his several efforts to stop. He recalls having been arrested several times for acts that he said were alcohol related. He had had several fights he says would not have occurred had he not been drinking. When the police became involved in these incidents, he recalls having been taken to a detox facility and, after each time, attempting to remain sober. The longest he remembers remaining sober is "bout two-three weeks." He tells of his admissions into rehabilitation programs and catalogs them as failures. He never completed a treatment program, although he says that he has been admitted into treatment twice after he has been through detox. Each time, however, he left after only a few days. Henry believes that he is an alcoholic, and says that he ought to "get off dis damn booze" soon, but at the time of the interview he has made no decision as to how he will do that and realistically doesn't think it will happen. Toward the end of the conversation, Henry will portray himself as remaining jobless, and that, in part, is due to his not having much hope of overcoming his alcohol problem.

We asked Henry about other family members. Though the specifics of his answer are brief, they illustrate the shared linkage to themes of attenuated relationships that dominate the social landscape of the homeless.

Q: Do you have other family here in town?

Henry: My mother and my father.

Q: Do you see them very often?

Henry: Naw. Not much. I'd say bout three times a year.

Q: Could you stay with them if you wanted?

Henry: Yeah, I guess so, but I don't want to. They don't have much money, and sides that, we don't get along so good. So, I don worry bout going round so much.

Q: How about other family members? Do you have brothers or sisters you might stay with?

Henry: Naw man, I mean I got 'em, a brother an two sisters, but they don't want nothin' to do with me less'n I changes a whole lots. They say they don't want no ol' drunk hangin' roun their house or their kids, so I don't hang there.

Q: What kinds of things do you do with your time? What do you do during the days?

Henry: I jus hang, man. Jus hang. I really don't do nothin.

Q: Do you ever work?

Henry: Yeah, ever lil while. Not much, though. I used to work down to the labor pool right reglar, but I don go down there much now. An fore that, I painted for this construction company sometimes, but they went out of business. So, I don't do much work now.

Up until this point in the story, Henry's account of his life is simple. He paints it almost in its entirety against the backdrop of alcoholism. His abuse of alcohol has led to the breakup of his family, the loss of his job, and his life on the streets. After more conversation about the work life of people on the streets, we turned the conversation to the topic of friends. When we asked him about friends, however, he shifted the emphasis from his own drinking to problems with interpersonal relationships in the homeless community.

Q: Do you have friends out here?

Henry: Naw, man. You can't have no friends out here. We say we got friends, but we don't. You can't trust nobody out here. Not now, you can't. You use ta could, but now you can't. Man, they'll stick you in a heart beat. That is, if they think you got somethin they want.

Q: You say you use to be able to trust people, where, out here on the streets, or people in general?

Henry: Out here on the streets. No, man, like you can trust folks where you live. But if you lived where we live, an like we live, you couldn't trust nobody neither. Now you use t'could. But now you can't.

For the first time in our conversation, Henry's story includes a reference to our life within the domiciled community as contrasted with life on the streets. As he briefly draws this contrast, he highlights a qualitative distinction between homeless life and our domiciled lifestyle. This demonstrates what homeless life is not. When talking about life on the streets, Henry cites the lack of friendship relationships, accounting for this by noting that there is not that possibility because of the meanness of some street people and the consequent lack of trust that characterizes homeless life. We asked Henry to clarify the historical linkage that he had used in the last section of the conversation.

Q: How do you mean "use t' could?"

Henry: I mean, back when I first started livin out here, I didn't have no trouble wid' nobody. But now, I do. Back den, it was people was jus livin like dey want to live, but now, dey feelin' sorry fo deyselves, an dey don feel nothin' fo nobody else, so dey do what dey can do to get what dey can get.

Q: What kinds of things have happened to you?

Henry: Oh, man, I been cut, I been hit up side d' head wit a boad, I been pushed off uv a buildin, I been, oh, man, I been done mos everthing to you can do to a man. I mean dey do anything to you. See dis. [points to a large scar on his arm.] Dat's where one dude pour lighter fluid on me an burn me to make me move so he could get my stuff.

Q: Is everybody like this out here?

Henry: No, not mos of em. Mos of em leave you lone. But some of em ain't like dat, an you can't tell who is an who ain't. So, less you knows em, you leaves em alone.

As I listened to Henry's account of a life filled with fear, there were echos of others' stories and the apprehension that surrounds their lives. There is practically no theme that is more dominant among chronically homeless people than the theme of fear. This is the central piece of Henry's conversation as his linkage to other horizons goes beyond contrasting his life with a more conventional lifestyle.

Henry makes the further comparison to the way life had been in an earlier era. Life as it "use ta be" was a time when people on the streets exercised some choice about their own lives, but avoided interfering in the lives of others. When he narratively draws the contrast with that earlier era, he concludes that now people feel sorry for themselves, evidently because of their poverty, and he perceives this self-pity as driving them to acquire what little they can from other homeless people by whatever means they have at their disposal.

It is against his portrayal of how people have become that Henry understands the scarcity of deeper relationships, or friendships, on the streets.

He understands that friendships are based on trust, and says that, for this reason, it really is not possible to have friendships among people on the streets since he can't trust anyone out there. Although the contours of his life have been peopled by many, he has come, through his lived experience, to affix his gaze on the few who can't be trusted. The rationale he articulates for this is one that is heard often among homeless people, and that is that the absolute poverty of homeless people creates within some of them an almost overpowering greed. This greed, when experienced in its overpoweringness, leads, or causes, some homeless people to do harm to others in order to obtain things for themselves. He doesn't look very far to link to horizons that give this meaning, as he itemizes a list of things that have been done to him, including someone pouring lighter fluid on him and burning him with it in order to "make me move so he can get my stuff."

There is a note of caution in Henry's articulation of his assessment of the homeless population, however. Not everyone is to be feared, but he has no way of knowing who will do harm to another, and who won't. To know that would involve getting to know others well, and friendships are not possible without this kind of personal knowledge. Because of the irregularity of the relationships, their transiency brought about by lack of regularized place and time, there is insufficient occasion to know people well and develop close relationships. Since Henry cannot know others well, he determines that it is better not to trust any of

them. Without knowing them well, there can be no trust, and without trust, there are no deeper and meaningful friendships.

When Henry tells us that "most of them will leave you alone," he is referencing a code or a moral order. Later, we learned that what he referenced was "the law of the streets." Henry's experience with the ones who don't follow the law of the streets frames the way in which he approaches the population of the streets. Since there is no ubiquitous code, or law, that enables one to be safe, his recipe is to not trust anyone.

The conversation then turns to an economy of the streets that Henry elaborates as stocked by articles of interest to homeless people and used in an economy of barter.

Q: What kinds of things do they want?

Henry: Anything, man, anything. I mean they ain't got nothin', an they wants somethin'. You know what I mean? See. An if they don't want it fo deyselves, they want it to use to get what they want.

Q: What do you mean?

Henry: I mean, if I got some cigarettes, an I don't smoke, which I don't, least not cigarettes, but if I got some cigarettes and you got some beer, I might can get you to swap me some beer for some cigarettes. Or you might know who want some cigarettes, an you might want to gi me some cigarettes fo me to watch somthin' of yours. You know, things like that.

Q: [Not recorded]

Henry: You out here by yoself mos all de time, an you spen mos all your time watchin' yo back.

Q: Do you ever feel scared?

Henry: Like, man, you can't ford to be scared. I try not to feel nothin. Cause if I go round and start feelin, I get scared, and then I get paranoid, and then I do stupid stuff, you know what I mean, and that gets me in trouble. I jus tries to be on my guard, you know what I mean?

In response to a question about material "things" that are in demand in the street economy, Henry begins to connect the acquisition of those things to a barter system that is, in part, supplied by the theft of those things. This theft, and the harm done to others in its accomplishment, is integral to the barter system that Henry describes. This barter system and the mistrust that it promotes, and by which life on the streets is characterized, is reflexively related from the perspective of Henry's gaze. The two, taken together, necessitate these street residents watching their backs as protective actions.

When Henry says that anyone on the streets by themselves spends most of the time watching their back, I was prompted to raise the question of fear. Henry's response was ambivalent. While he is quick to acknowledge fear, he also says, in effect, that he must deny it and keep his mind on other things. His perception is that if a person allows himself to think about fear, fear then becomes paramount in one's thinking. And when it becomes paramount, it shapes the balance of thoughts, and hence emotions. Henry tells us that fear produces what he calls stupid stuff, or, more technically, a form of paranoia. That in itself can generate other actions that will in turn generate more negative reactions, and hence more to fear. From this point on, fear, its behavioral

consequences, and the denial of this emotion, frame the balance of the conversation. We continued the conversation as Henry responds to a question about "the stupid" behaviors that he says characterize paranoia.

Q: Like what kind of "stupid stuff" do you do?

Henry: Like I think somebody gone hurt me, or they settin' me up, an if I get scared of that, and I think they got a gun or somethin, you know, cause, see, you got to get them first fo they gets you, cause the one that gets to the other first is gon win. You know. So if he don have no plans to get me, then I may be startin' somethin' fo nothin. Like man, you probably go home at night where you safe, an you smoke that pipe, where can't nobody get to you, an you go to work in the daytime down to the University, where you safe, an you drives roun the streets an man you sittin there all safe an you ain't got no worries, cause dat's the way you folks live. But then you come down here where we are, and you probably scared shitless. Man, like you probably scared to death right now. You think I'm goin' to hit you up side the head and steal yo money and yo car keys and yo cigarettes, and then steal your car. But let me tell you, man, you ain't got nothin' to worry bout me, cause I know what it like to be scared.

The emotion of fear, when it becomes paramount, prompts responses that Henry sees as irrational because of the behavioral consequences that follow, all of which adds to the things that Henry fears, when in fact there's nothing of which to be afraid. Henry depicts himself as playing the odds by staying in what he sees as known places, hanging out by himself, and thinking about things other than fear, or the possible events that might prompt his own fear.

Having articulated his own fear, Henry frames what he assumes would be my response, and makes the assumption that since I am in an unknown place with an unknown person, I must also be afraid. He makes this assumption

because of his view of "my world," a world in which I go back and forth between safe places, and among people who are safe. On that basis, he tries to reassure me that there's "nothing to worry about." When I attempt to let him know that I'm not afraid in the next part of the conversation (at least not in a public park in the middle of the afternoon when there are many others around) Henry refuses to accept this, and goes on to establish why it is that I have no need to be afraid.

Q: No, I'm not scared right now.

Henry: Now jus a minute. You let me talk. You wanted to hear me talk, an I'm talkin'. [laughs] Now you listen here. I know what it is to be afraid of everybody--and they shadow. Cause dat's the way it is for me all d' time. You know. See, it like dis. Now if I was high and crazy, you might have a right to be scared, cause that's the way most of these guys is. Most ever body is either high, or they wantin' to be, an dat make dem do all kinds of crazy things. But see, I don't get high. I don't get high cause that's not in my interest. Cause see, we got our own laws down here. Now you probably don think so, cause they not your laws. But we got our laws, you know. An if I hurt somebody what ain't don nothin' to me, then somebody, or somethin' gon get me back. Now if I don get scared, an I don get paranoid, then I don't think they gon get me, an I be alright. So if I'm scared, I jus thinks about somethin' else. You know. Then even if I be scared, I don get into no trouble. Like, you know, what I was sayin'. You got your laws and we got ours. Now if you aks somebody down here if they scared, they might look at you like they think you crazy. But down inside, they be scared. An you aksing them, that gon make them scared of you, caus they say "he might be up to somethin, or he wouldn't be aksing me if I was scared." Now I'm not talkin bout "you," you know, you know. I'm talkin' bout folks in general. Like if I was to aks that guy over yonder if he scared, he'd say, "Now dat be right curious. Why he aks me dat, less he gone see if I might have somethin' to be scared of, like I got me some money, or somethin? An he settin me up so he can get it." You see, we don't aks nobody nothin. I leave you alone

and you leaves me alone. Now if you want to give me somethin, then that's alright. But we don't aks nothin. Specially bout bein' scared. You know what I mean? Bein' scared is like a snake sunnin' an sleepin' on a rock. If you lets him alone, you gon be alright, but if you go pokin round there he gone wake up and bite yo ass, man. I ain't lyin.' So out here aksin' if you scared is somethin' you jus don do, an in a manner of fact, if the truth be knowed, nobody gon admit they scared cause dat jus cause trouble.

In attempting to define the space in the park for me, Henry continues to insist on letting me know that he's not on drugs. This is a way of saying that he is rational and in control of himself, and therefore I am not in any danger from him. Once again, Henry links his perception of my position in the homeless world to his understanding of my domiciled social world. He believes that my normal social space is safe and he is attempting to make himself familiar to me so that I can see this present social space as not alien. Therefore, I should feel safe.

Henry, for all his drinking, presents himself as something of a sage old man as he returns to his wisdom about being "scared." He has listened to others talk of life on the streets and has blended strands of their talk into a coherent body of wisdom about how one should deal with life on the streets. Several times in the interview, Henry articulates just this kind of street wisdom regarding fear and the ways in which one should handle it. He references the law of the streets as a way of dealing with fear, and the objects of fear in interpersonal relationships, but he also sees that the application of the law of the streets is limited. He continues to show that if one is scared, it is best to leave that feeling

alone. To do this, he makes an analogy to a snake. A sunning snake should be left alone, just like fear, and he will leave you alone. But if you probe into the existence or origins of fear, then, like the snake, it will "bite yo ass." For that reason one is better off to leave the fear alone, or deny it.

In the following portion of the interview, Henry expounds on the law of the streets. The law of the streets, when it is operative, is seen as a protection against those things of which people are afraid. But for him, laws are linked to the social world of which one is a part. In the social world of the domiciled, there is one set of rules. In the homeless world, there is quite a different set. In the homeless world, or the world of the streets, the laws apply only under certain conditions. Without these conditions, the laws do not necessarily apply. When they do not apply has not so much to do with the cessation of their existence, but with the fact that there is simply no viable way to control the deviance through the enforcement of the laws.

Q: You through? [laughing]

Henry: Well, fo a minute, till I catches my breath, or you aks me somethin' else, whichever one come first.

Q: Now, you said that we have our laws and you have yours. What did you mean by that?

Henry: By what?

Q: First of all, by "we" and "you," and secondly, by two different sets of laws.

Henry: Well, I'll tell you, what did you say your name was?

Q: John

Henry: You don't want me to call you doctor somethin' or other?

Q: Just call me John. You call me John, and I'll call you Henry. Deal?

Henry: Deal. O.K. John, now what was it you was aksing? Oh yeah. Bout the "we" and "you." They's two sets of people, the way I sees it. Those who has and those that don't. Now if you got a job, an a place to stay, you one of those that has. An if you don't have no job, an no place to stay, you one of them that don't. Now you live yo lives one way. You calls the police, an they come out an protect you. You say, hey police, somebody done stole my car, or somebody done broke in an stole my money, or my jewels. An the police, they say, "be right there." Ummh man, that cigar shore smell good.

Q: I thought you didn't smoke.

Henry: I don't smoke cigarettes, but sometime a cigar taste good. I like a good cigar. Back yonder when I was in the navy, I'd buy me a box of cigars and smoke em on the ship. Now that would piss folk off if I smoked em down below, but sometime I'd go up on the deck and stand ginst the rail, and jus watch the ocean and the sky, and smoke me one of my fine cigars. Know what I mean.

Q: You want a cigar?

Henry: You done lit that one, man. I ain't gon smoke your cigar.

Q: No. I have another one in the car. You want it?

Henry: Yeah, man. That would sho taste good. If you don't mind.

[I walked to the car, retrieved a cigar, brought it back to where we were talking, clipped the end, and gave it to Henry, who sniffed it with an air of expertise.]

Henry: Man that smell good. That's a fine cigar! I ain't smoked one of these in ten years. Sometime I smoke a Swisher Sweet or a

Tampa Nugget, you know. But this is somethin special. You sure you don't mind?

Q: No. I gave it to you, didn't I. Now would I have walked all the way up there and brought the thing down to you if I didn't want to give it to you? What kind of an ass do you think I am.

Henry: You alright, man. You alright.

[I lit Henry's cigar, and he leaned back against the back of the bench and began to smoke it.]

Henry: Now, what all do you want to know? Now I can't talk til this thing burn up, cause that'd be bout a hour or two, an I ain't got that much to say. [he laughs]

Q: I don't believe that. I believe you could keep talking through three cigars. [We both laugh.]

Henry: Ok. get your pad back an start writin again. Now where was we?

Q: The police, and "we" and "you."

Henry: Oh yeah. The police. What was I sayin'? Lets me see your pad. Man you sho writin lots of stuff. You gon let me read it? [he looks at the pad.] Man I can't read that shit. Fact is, you can't read that. How you gon read that shit?

Q: Believe me, I can read it, or most of it anyway.

Henry: Shit, man, you writin this down too?

Q: Yep.

Henry: Anyways. The police. You know, if you has somebody break into yo house, an you calls the police, they gon come right out, an they gon take finger prints, an they gon vestigate the crime. Now they might not catch the man what done it, but they gon try. An they gon do that cause y'all all part of the same group. You know. Y'all all has jobs, and y'all all has places to stay, you know, sleep, store your stuff, kick back, relax, smoke fine

cigars, you know what I mean. It like you all part of the same club. Now you may not be part of the same club, but all the clubs is still clubs an if you ain't part of some club, you don't fit in an don't nobody care about you. But now we don't have no club.

In this segment of the interview, Henry views, and makes visible in stark contrast in his narrative, two very separate worlds; the world of the domiciled and the world of the homeless. Henry delineates these two divergent worlds as his and mine, or "we and you." As he traces the contours of these two worlds, he sees that they are defined by those who have and those who don't have, and then further draws the distinction between the two worlds by referencing the world of the domiciled as a club, or a network of clubs. Henry's reference to the club is a reference to a structured world, and this even more dramatically draws the distinction between the structured domiciled world and the unstructured world of homeless people. He notes that perhaps all are not members of the same club, but the different "clubs" are interrelated and they provide the protection of the broader group.

After drawing lines of delineation between the two worlds, Henry completes his depiction of the contours of the two worlds in distinct images as he describes the lifestyle of the "club," or the domiciled world. With refined and artful strokes, he paints a vivid picture of his perception of the domiciled world to which he links his experience, leaving even more vivid by the absence of complementary imagery the stark and resourceless world of the streets. The "club," or structured world, is bound by a commonality that facilitates the

possession and maintenance of resources. These in turn resource the lifestyle of the club.

What compounds this division for Henry is that within the structured world, he sees one set of laws, and in the world of the homeless, the world of the streets, he sees a different set of laws. He further explicates this gaze by including his understanding that laws are linked with the respective groups and are also linked with the power of enforcement. In the domiciled world, the power to enforce laws is possible because of the structural resources of that world. Against this backdrop of conflicted laws, Henry further pictures what happens if someone steals the stuff that belongs to the members of the club as he elaborates the role of the police in enforcing the law and protecting and keeping safe the members of the club. Within his range of vision, he sees that the police are a part of the structured world and exist for the benefit of those within it.

As we probed further into Henry's linkages, we heard him articulate the mechanisms he attributes to the structured world that unite them.

Q: Homeless people aren't "tied together" in some way?

Henry: Yeah, we tied together in some way, but it ain't like a club. I mean, how I gon say to some other dude "come over to my house" when I ain't got no house? How'm I gon say to some chick, come over to my pad when I ain't got no pad? How'm I gon say, "meet you after work" when I ain't got no work. Least not steady work. I'm gon say meet me down to the labor pool? Right! See what I mean? An one more thing. Some of y'all may be the boss, and somebody else'll work for you, maybe, but, everybody got somethin in common. See what I

mean? An see, look a here. We ain't even got no watch. How'm I gon say "I'll see you bout seven" when I might not even know what day of the week it is. Or the month. I mean, see, if I lucks up and gets to where he's at--at 7:00, then he might be thinkin its Monday and I'm thinkin' its Tuesday. Now what day we gon meet? I mean even if we say we gon meet Monday, how I'm gon know its Monday and it ain't Tuesday? I mean, I don't keep up with that stuff man. The onliest days I keeps up with is Tuesday an Friday an Sunday. An sometime I foget those days. An mos uh d time, th other dudes don't even care. Now if you aks em, dey can sit dere an figure it, but dey don know right off.

As Henry recalls his own construction of time, he links the world of homeless people in general to the absence of a shared construction of time and to placelessness. Repeating his articulation of the inability of homeless people to establish relationships, he depicts the homeless world again as one in which placelessness and non-structured time result in the inability to establish structured relationships. From his vantage point, this inability is the basis for a lack of structure that makes life unpredictable, and hence frightening.

The only time with which Henry is concerned is certain days of the week. His time, as a rule, revolves around these days, and this is his only link to the temporal structures in the world of the domiciled. As Henry describes it, there is no time that is agreed upon in the homeless world. Nor is there the ability to regularly establish place without time, or, for that matter, time without space. These are categories that are meaningless to homeless people. Without shared temporal constructions and without place, there can be no "clubs," or structures.

When stable relationships occur for Henry, it is because of shared constructions of time and space.

After Henry began to look to time, space, and structure, I asked him why Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays were important to him.

Q: Why do you keep up with Tuesday and Friday and Sunday?

Henry: I keeps up with Tuesday, cause that's the day the garbage trucks come through, and I knows they ain't nothin else out there fo me to hunt for. An I keeps up with Fridays, cause that's the day most folks get paid, an I might fin somebody'll buy me a beer or two, an I keeps up with Sunday cause that's the day they feeds down to the churches downtown.

Q: How do you know what time it is?

Henry: I don't care what time it is most uh th time. I knows when it get light an I knows when it get dark. When it get light, if it's Tuesday, I may make one more run by the garbage cans. When it get dark, I head home. An when it Friday, when it get afternoon, bout fo 'clock, then I heads down to the terminal.

Q: Why the terminal?

Henry: Cause dat's where folks I know been workin' get offa d bus, an I go down an try to skeer up somebody'll buy me a beer. Dat's bout all the time I keeps. Ceptin Sundays. Then I waits for a while after it get light, an me an some mo head on down to the church an get in line to eat.

Q: Where is home for you?

Henry: Down yonder in a ol warehouse. They ain't nothin in it, ceptin a few ol' tramps, an I stay in there at night. I even got me a lock for where I stay. See this key?

Q: So is that your home?

- Henry: It's my cathole. An I sleeps in it, an I keeps what lil stuff I got in it.
- Q: Do you feel safe there?
- Henry: Man, like I don't feel safe nowhere. They's other homeless that stays there too. One night, when it was cold back in the winter, one of em damn near set d place afire, building hisself a fire inside. After we put it out, I said, "man, you crazy. You can't stay here no mo if you gon do this,"
- Q: Is that part of your law?
- Henry: Naw, that ain't no law. It's my law.
- Q: Did he leave?
- Henry: Naw. Not then. One day, bout a week later, he didn't come back. He probably dead.
- Q: Why would you say that?
- Henry: I think he had a condition of some kind what was gon kill him. That's what he said. But he didn't come back after bout a week, so he musta died or somethin. That's what we all said, anyhow. Or maybe somebody kilt him, crazy like he wuz.
- Q: Anyway. Back to being safe down at the warehouse.
- Henry: So I'm scared in the warehouse, least if I get honest bout it, see, cause ain't nobody got nothin, an lots of folks what stay there are crazy anyhow. An if they wants somethin I got, they may just try to take it, you know. Now if I'm awake, an if I'm there, an if I'm sober, then they ain't gon bother nothin.
- Q: What about your key? I thought the place was locked.
- Henry: That help, but it don't stop nothin if they thinks about it. I mean, they might hide out an wait. Then when I come up, they could kick my ass, and what good's a lock and key then? They done got the key!

- Q: So what's the law of the streets, or whatever you call "your" law, if it doesn't do any good to protect you and your cathole?
- Henry: It work pretty good when they other folk around, but when you by yourself, it jus' whoever can survive the best. I guess that part of the law. Whoever survive the best.
- Q: What are some other parts to the law?
- Henry: I don't know for sure. I spose I never really thought bout it. Maybe, ummh, let me think. Don't mess in nobody business. Don't ask nobody for nothin. Don't ask too many questions. Don't take nobody else's stuff. Stay to yoself unless you aksed, or you really know somebody. I don't know. That's hard. They's lots a talk bout the law of the street, but it ain't written down anywhere, and I guess I can't say zactly what it is.
- Q: Does it say anything about not ratting on anybody else?
- Henry: How you gon' rat if you don't know nothin about anybody else. See, dat part of de law. You don pry into nobody else's business. Dat way, you don't know nothin' to rat on nobody about.
- Q: Does it say anything about if you have a place, or a territory, or whatever, that you should respect that?
- Henry: Yeah, I guess it do. That's kinda what I mean bout messin' in somebody else business. But it ain't writ down. And they ain't nobody gon do nothin to you if you bust it, cept they might not talk to you if you messup. But they ain't no police. I mean, how you gon make somebody do somethin' or not do somethin' out here. You ain't. You know what I mean? You ain't. So that why you scared. That why nobody trust nobody else. They ain't nobody make folk out here behave.

For Henry, fear is one of his primary emotions and is rooted in the unpredictability of life. As he recounts the law of the streets, Henry notes that there's no way to control the deviation from this law. Police are not a part of this

non-structured world of the homeless, and hence there is no mechanism for controlling deviance. Therefore, since you can't trust some people, and you can't tell whom you can and cannot trust, the safest way is to not trust anyone, to be alone in the homeless world.

From this point, for the balance of the conversation, we turned to Henry's future plans. While these were vague in the sense of not having plans, he had a vision of what his future might consist and what that future might look like.

Q: So where do you go from here?

Henry: What you mean?

Q: You goin' to get a job?

Henry: Naw man, they ain't no jobs out there fo me. I'm jus a ol' drunk. Nobody want to hire a ol' drunk. Now do they? Nawsir, I spose I'll jus keep on lik I am. Done got use to it now. An sides dat. I can't change it anyways. It'd be too much fo me to do. Startin' over in a new world at my age. Jus can't do it. So, I'll jus live out my life like dis.

Q: You don't think you could get off of the booze and learn to work. Keep a job. Get you a place to stay?

Henry: Naw man. Like I done said. I done tried gettin off of d' booze. But seems like I jus can't do it, so dis is my world fo keeps. I may not like it, but it my world. An I got to live it out. Live in it an die in it.

At this point, Henry links his present condition of alcoholism to his experience of losing his job down at the shipyards. There is a sense of inevitability about how he now views the world. There are no jobs for an alcoholic, and being an alcoholic, there's no way he can get a job. Henry's past

shapes his future. The homeless world is his world, and he will continue to live in it.

Trine

Trine is a white male who is between 28 and 33 years old. He "lives" at the Jacksonville beaches. Of moderate height, and slender, Trine does not stand out in any group because of any physical qualities. However, he is gregarious and articulate when engaged in normal conversation. Trine is well known and apparently liked by both homeless people who also live out at the beaches and by many of those who work with the homeless. Trine's assigned name is one that he has been called in the past, but is no longer used. He originally was called by "Listerine," because of his drinking Listerine mouthwash periodically for its alcohol content. A former girlfriend's two year old child could not pronounce "Listerine" and called him something that sounded like Latrine. From this, he derived the name "Trine." I mention this as the etymology of the name in itself denotes a shared linkage with other homeless people who sometimes use alternative sources for their alcohol consumption. For this reason, there evidently are many homeless people and other "hobo" types who go by the name of "Listerine."

I interviewed Trine at a labor pool in Jacksonville Beach at about 5:30 on a Monday morning in February. I had met him at a local church the night before, as we were beginning the annual homeless count at the beach. The

church had opened its doors to homeless people who wanted a place to stay due to inclement weather. Trine, along with two friends, one male and one female, had been among those who had stayed the night there. The next morning, one of my colleagues, I, and a number of students from the university and other volunteers, continued the homeless count at a labor pool. I was surprised to see Trine again, but was likewise glad to talk with him in more depth.

While the tone of his conversation, when reduced to writing, sounds somewhat angry, this was not the way he sounded when he presented himself in person. There was even a sense of humor in much that he said. As the following interview is read, it is helpful to remember that, while he seems angry, in person there was little or no bitterness that came through in his speaking.

As the conversation begins, we turn to geographical space, and to Trine's status as a homeless person within that space.

Q: **What can you tell me about your life? How do you see it as you look back over the time you've spent on the streets?**

Trine: **Well, I'm not really on the streets now.**

Q: **So why were you at the church last night?**

Trine: **I broke up with my girl, and I didn't have any place to stay and it was cold, so I come on down there.**

Q: **You've been staying with your girlfriend?**

Trine: **Well, we had a room together, and I been stayin' there.**

Q: **How long did you have your room together?**

- Trine: About a week, almost.
- Q: Where did you stay before that?
- Trine: Down on the beach.
- Q: Did she stay down there too?
- Trine: Yeah, sometimes. Sometimes she stayed with somebody else. Sometimes me and her stayed in a motel.
- Q: When you stay with her, do you usually stay at the beach or somewhere else?
- Trine: Yeah, sometimes.
- Q: Sometimes what? At the beach?
- Trine: Yeah.
- Q: I'm not trying to intrude on your space, but what kind of relationship did you have with her?
- Trine: We just were...we just hung around together. A little smokin', a little drinkin', a little fuckin'. Not much else. It's not like, you know, like we're married or anything. We just hung around together, and when we didn't get along good we'd split. When we got along good, we didn't. Right now we ain't gettin' along good, so we split.
- Q: So, in general, what's life like for you? What's it been like?
- Trine: Rough, man. Rough
- Q: Can you tell us about your life?
- Trine: Well, not really much to tell. I just try to get along.
- Q: Do you work down here every day?
- Trine: Yeah, a lot of days, when I get a ticket. Sometimes I don't come down. Sometimes I come down and don't get a ticket.

- Q: What do you do when you're not working?
- Trine: Just mess around, sometimes jus' hang down at the beach.
- Q: What else do you do?
- Trine: I don't know. Not much. Can't do much. No money. Sometimes I go fishing.
- Q: How often do you go fishing?
- Trine: I don't know. Bout two-three days a week. [laughs]
- Q: You go swimming during the winter? When it's cold?
- Trine: No, jus walk around--you know. Jus hang out.
- Q: How long have you lived out here at the beach?
- Trine: I don't really live at the beach.
- Q: Where do you usually live?
- Trine: I don't know. No where really. I guess I live at the beach most of the time. Sometimes in the woods. You know, away from everybody where nobody else gets in my shit. Back last summer, I stayed out there in the woods for a while, but the mosquitos and gnats were eatin' me up, so I gave up on that. Came back in an' rented me a room in the motel where I could get a shower and some sleep. Then no money, so I'm back to the beach.
- Q: So how long have you been out here at the beaches?
- Trine: I don't know. Maybe about five years.
- Q: If you don't see yourself as living in a rooming house, or somewhere like that, do consider yourself homeless?
- Trine: It depends. Sometimes I am, sometimes I'm not. I guess it depends on what you consider homeless. If I'm livin' in a

motel or roomin' house, then I'm not homeless. If I'm livin' on the beach, then I guess I am.

Q: What do you consider homeless?

Trine: I don't know, really. I guess somebody that ain't got a regular place to stay. So, I guess I'm homeless in a way.

Q: Do you stay in rooming houses very often?

Trine: Every once in a while. Sometimes, several of us'll get together and get a room at the motel, but that's gettin' hard to do.

Q: Why is that?

Trine: It's gettin' hard to find enough guys with enough money to get a room. Lot of guys don't like to work too much. But sometimes we do. At least when it's cold.

Q: When it's warm, like in the summer, do you still get a room? never? sometimes? most of the time?

Trine: Yeah if we can. See, it's like bad out on the streets, an you got to get inside when you can.

As we begin the conversation, Trine is reluctant to verbalize his status as a resident of the streets, but as he, with prodding, thinks about his situation, he ultimately acknowledges that he is homeless, and, later in the conversation, generally defines his life situation as homeless. However, Trine notes that homelessness is defined by perspective or by context. From the perspective of not having "a regular place to stay", he is homeless. Yet, as he talks about space, there is a sense of place with which he identifies that revolves around the beaches, the woods, the motels and rooming houses, and the labor pools.

In the early part of the conversation, Trine defines his space, out of his experience of the past five years, in a variety of ways, including this sense of place, which is not a stable living space. He tells his story reluctantly, hesitantly, as he links his story to the ostensible reasons for his "residence" or identification with each place. Wherever he stays, it's because the place serves as sanctuary, or other urgent purposes, until he's run off. But he is also quick to recall that he doesn't have unlimited access to any of these places. The utility of each is, in some sense defined by, and defines, the weaknesses and strengths of the other. Clearly his preferred space is the rooming house or the motel, where several homeless people get together and rent a room. These are places of sanctuary from the elements, heat, cold, rain, mosquitos and gnats, from the streets, or for cleaning up, or getting uninterrupted sleep. But Trine and others like him are limited by lack of funds, so he escapes to the woods for privacy and lack of interference in his life. The beach is for fishing, or just hanging out, and the labor pool is for work, or sanctuary from poverty. As he recounts his space, all of these places are linked together to make visible the space he inhabits and place as he constructs it.

In the midst of talk about physical place, the subject of Trine's relationship with his girlfriend is mentioned, which is one of the few references to owned social space. The picture he presents is that of a relationship that is apparently very casual, with little investment in it. As he portrays the relationship, he omits any reference to any in-depth commitment. Nor does he portray the relationship

as having any apparent significance. Like the space he inhabits, and sometimes shares, Trine portrays the relationship with his girlfriend as very loosely held, somewhat casual, and, in a sense, shared with other men.

Trine's memory of life on the streets as a homeless man was best characterized as "tough" or "bad." He had previously mentioned this, and I asked him to look again to those experiences and tell me just how bad they were.

Q: How is it bad out on the streets?

Trine: I don't know man. The cops are really gettin' on us now.

Q: How is that?

Trine: I don't know, man. They just are. Seems like I can't do nothin' without them bastards hasslin' me. It gets old gettin' busted.

Q: You're afraid of the cops?

Trine: Yeah, man. All the time. Hassle hassle hassle. You always got to watch your ass. Man, they get into your shit.

Q: How do they get into your shit?

Trine: Man, they always findin' something to arrest you for. You down on the beach with a little drink and boom. They bust your butt. I can't even get no driver's licence. Lost that two years ago. Hell, they even gave me a DUI on a bicycle. Can you believe that? Gettin' a DUI on a bicycle! And spendin time in the fuckin' jail for it. Just standin' here thinkin' about it, it's funny, ain't it? Sometimes it is. But that's really the worst thing of all.

Q: Jail?

Trine: Yeah. I been in an out of the damned jail so much it almost feels like home.

Even though I had asked about fear, as the conversation turns to what characterizes the "badness of the streets," Trine merely answers my question in the affirmative, without articulating fear at all. He then proceeds to portray a world "peopled" with cops. By focusing solely on the police, with no reference to anything that he has done, Trine is building a narrative that sets him over against the police.

When the conversation turns to what characterizes the "badness" of the streets for Trine, he immediately focuses on a world built around the theme of fear of "cops." As Trine tells his story, he represents himself as being a victim of little more than the self indulgent play of the police, occupying their time and utilizing their authority to arrest him for what he sees as trivial events and should not be considered as infractions of the law. In his eyes, however, Trine sees this as serious, for what to them is trivial is to him a matter of real consequence in that it effects his life in consequential ways.

Within the further conversational turn to the specific qualities that characterize the "badness" of the streets, Trine's gaze is affixed on the specific events of his experience with the "cops." There is no scan across distant and vast horizons for this linkage. It is near horizons on which Trine's gaze falls. As "badness" depends on perspective, and the criterion against which it is judged, Trine judges the actions of the police against the normative standards of the streets that always lie behind his assessment of the behavior of others. He talks about what the police do. They "hassle" and "get into your shit."

When asked what this means, and how, specifically, "they get into your shit," Trine begins what is to be a catalog of the specific behaviors that characterize the things the police will do, and he builds this list throughout the interview. The portrayal is one in which the cops are arrayed in total opposition to himself: he is having a mere social drink on the beach and for this he is "busted." This is an action he views as totally outside of the realm of reasonableness. As a background to his portrayal of the next item, he tells briefly that he has lost his driver's license for driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol. Then he lists his arrest for DUI on a bicycle and portrays it as ludicrous, holding it up as an example of the pettiness to which the cops stoop to hassle him and "get into his shit." Yet, from another perspective, with the irony of humor, Trine suggests that we both may be able to laugh at this major production over such a ludicrously insignificant act as being drunk while riding a bicycle in the early hours of the morning, for which he is given a DUI.

The primary experience to which Trine links his understanding of the badness of the streets and cops is that for trivial infractions of the law, the police can have him placed in jail. This has happened so frequently that jail is added to the list of "places" with which he can identify as "familiar," comparing it to "home." This is not necessarily a reference to literal "home," but a place of familiarity, and referred to more as social space than to physical. This is the culmination of the folly of the police in his eyes, with ludicrous arrests leading up to the final indignity of spending time in jail. The sheer weight of the silliness of

it all is painted crisply and starkly as he shows the authority of the social world arrayed against him.

We began to go into more detail as to the specifics of what "the cops" would do to make life on the streets difficult.

Q: You got a DUI on a bicycle? How'd that happen?

Trine: That is some shit, ain't it? I was jus ridin' down the road one night, wasn't hurtin' nobody, mindin' my own business, an the fuckin' cops stops me and hauls my ass in.

Q: Were you drinking?

Trine: Yeah I was drinkin, but I wasn't hurtin' nobody. Jus ridin' down the road, mindin' my own business, 1:30 in the morning, and they hauled my ass in. Kept me for three fuckin' days. No bail, no nothin. For three drinks on a bicycle. And it wasn't just the cops neither. It's the judges, too. I mean, man, I didn't have no lawyer or nothin'.

Q: Why didn't you have a lawyer? I thought they had to give you one.

Trine: No, man. Not in that court. DUI court, it sucks. Then I got some more time for being drunk. At least they can't pull your licence for a DUI on a bicycle.

Q: Why did you get more time for being drunk?

Trine: I don't know man. When you got no place to live, like no address, no ID, then they're tryin' to get you off the streets. Go to the homeless shelter downtown. That's what they want you to do. They don't want none of us out here at the beaches. Tryin' to "clean up the place." [does quotes with his fingers] Get us off the streets. Make it nice and pretty for the fuckin' tourists, you know. Like we ain't worth nothin', you know. You see all these guys down here? This is the only job we can get. An you can't earn enough workin' down here to buy shit. These fuckers'll rob your ass blind. Pay you

minimum wage and make \$10.00 an hour off you. Then you ain't got no place to stay, so you're out on the streets an the cops hassle your ass.

As the interview progresses, we can hear Trine very artfully and imaginatively continue his personalized depiction of life on the streets and the role of the police within that world as he reinforces his portrayal of his own innocence. From my own time spent on the streets, I have come to recognize that his reference to the phrase, "wasn't hurtin' nobody," is a reference to the "law of the streets." This is the normative standard of conduct within Trine's world. Within that domain, whatever one does is not only permissible but, in many instances, positively good if no one is being hurt.

After reiterating this rule, Trine further paints the picture of himself as victim. The presence of the police is ubiquitous. Not only is that presence omnipresent, but it permeates whatever construction of time is theirs, also. He takes as an example the time of day. Against the backdrop of the world as Trine understands it, it is as though there should be some time for the homeless to enjoy the world. It was 1:30 in the morning, when traffic is light, when he was riding his bicycle and arrested for DUI. From Trine's perspective, it is as though the world should be divided into two temporal domains—domiciled time and homeless time.

To add insult to injury, Trine continues the details, making his difficulties with the world of the domiciled more vivid all the while: three more days he spent for being drunk. While he displays a familiarity with the court system,

Trine is either ignorant of, or omits knowledge of, any other charges against him. The whole episode has reached a sufficient level of absurdity that he no longer thinks it worth the energy or consideration to figure it out. In addition, he doesn't feel it makes any material difference. If they don't arrest him on one charge, they'll find another offense with which to charge him. Trine does seem to find some relief in at least one boundary: they can't pull his license for DUI, if only because he has already had his licence revoked and there is no license to pull.

The big issue to which Trine speaks in this part of the interview is that, from his point of view, the homeless are not only objects of police harassment, they are seen as dirtying up the streets. This, in fact, is what he says forms much of the basis of the police harassment. From his perception of the domiciled, this is one part of a twofold liability that homeless people bring to the streets they inhabit. He also believes that they are perceived as not only dirtying up the streets, but are likely a threat to peoples' lives and well-being. Further, they also are a restraint on the economy, as the sight of homeless people will be detrimental to the tourist trade. For these reasons, among others, the police and members of the power structure of the community want them off of the streets at any cost and by any means.

Seeking a remedy for their presence is not difficult as they are easily recognized by having no place to stay, and no ID. Being so readily identifiable, Trine tells of two commonly accepted remedies for their presence. Either place them in the homeless shelter downtown, or arrest them and place them in the

jail. Many homeless people see the new homeless center downtown as a warehouse at best, and at worst, as an equivalent setting to jail. They perceive jail and the homeless shelter as being the preferred options of the domiciled community as remedies for the "homeless problem." While this may be expressed in different ways, many of the homeless people see it as only different ways of saying the same thing: if homeless people don't go there willingly, they should be arrested, not for doing wrong or for disturbing the social order, but to clean up the streets (Goffman, 1963).

Trine has sketched a reasonably inclusive representation, from his perspective, of his social location in relationship to the police. To see if this was close to what he had said, I asked him:

Q: Do you get along with any of the police?

Trine: Shit no, man. Hell no! Fuckin' judges, cops, they're all alike. They're assholes. You got to spend all your time tryin' to stay out of their way. Busted my fuckin' girlfriend for prostitution. She's not no whore, man.

In response to my question, Trine emphasizes the intimate linkage and kindred spirit he sees between judges and police. He has presented himself as standing alone while the entire justice system is arrayed against him. In response to his strong generalization, I ask him if there are any exceptions. He more than emphatically says that there are none. Then Trine begins to expand his horizons to include others over against whom the police set themselves in opposition, in this case, his girlfriend. The linkage is readily available to him as

he recalls her experience in which they arrested her for prostitution. In linking to this experience he includes his protest that she is no whore, but a person who has also been victimized because of her life situation. This protestation and my follow-up question lead to more discussion about the girlfriend.

Q: Is she in jail now?

Trine: No, she's got her somebody else.

Q: Is she the one who was at the church with you last night?

Trine: Yeah. We didn't get along too good anyway.

Q: Ya'll broke up last night?

Trine: Yeah.

Q: How long was she your girlfriend?

Trine: Off and on for bout two months. We'll probably get back together again. Unless they bust her for prostitution again.

Trine's response references the casual nature of his relationship with the girlfriend. As he develops this picture out of the experiences to which he is linking, the important thing is not that she is his girlfriend, but that she is one of those, like himself, against whom the criminal justice system is set.

This brief interlude brings more understanding to this experiential linkage of relationships. The basis for breaking up is "not getting along too good." When they get over this present rift, or when they're getting along better, they'll probably get back together again. As Trine makes this comment, it is not so much a sign of hope, or affection, but is more a depiction of the way things,

including relationships, are on the streets. We shifted this train of conversation to the question of whether or not his girlfriend "really is" a prostitute.

Q: Is she a prostitute?

Trine: No, man. She ain't no prostitute. They set her ass up. This plain clothes dude came up and asked her for some and the next thing, they took her in.

Q: Did they offer her money?

Trine: No. I think she said she would if they'd give her a rock. I really don't know. I wasn't there, and we didn't really talk about it that much. When she got out we didn't get along so good for a while, and then when we got back together we never talked about it no more. Hey, you got a smoke?

The question of whether or not his girlfriend is a prostitute is answered by his argument that she has been set up. This is another bit of evidence that completes the argument that, on the streets, one doesn't have to do anything wrong to be on the wrong side of the law. He arrays these arguments, including the unjust arrest of his girlfriend, to illustrate that if there are no valid charges against a homeless person, the police are capable of going so far as to set that person up for an arrest, even if by deception or dishonesty. This arrest for prostitution is, again, a trumped up charge. The story of victimization is complete.

Changing the subject, Trine asks if I have a smoke. This request may well have been a diversionary tactic to disrupt the conversation about his girlfriend, or it may be that the relationship was of no more significance than a

smoke. I walked to the car, retrieved some cigarettes, and gave him the pack and the conversation resumed.

Trine: **Thanks, man. See it's like this. When you out of work, and don't have any place to stay, it's tough. Now I will admit that I drink some. And I smoke some dope ever once in a while. But I don't do nothin' really bad, you know. I mean. I don't break in and steal nothin from nobody. I don't hurt nobody. An I get along with most folks pretty good. But man, if you saw my record, you'd think I was a real bad ass. You know what I mean? And now I can't get no job cause I'm homeless, and cause I'm an ex-con.**

After getting the cigarettes, Trine returns to the theme of how tough it is on the streets, confronted with no work, (the labor pool doesn't count) and having no place to stay (the homeless shelters do not count). He can admit to certain behaviors that may be considered a little bad, or inappropriate, in the domiciled world, but as long as he hurts no one, he should be left alone. Then he lists two specific rules that are "really wrong," according to the relevant norms to which he appeals. Those are breaking in and stealing, and hurting someone else. These are tenets of the law of the streets and he hasn't broken either of them. In spite of all of this, Trine perceives himself as getting "along with most folks pretty good," even though if he were known only by his police record, he would appear to be a real "bad ass."

Then, as if asking me to take his perspective, he presents two different narrative orientations of himself that stand in opposition. One depicts how he is to be seen if one looks to his arrest record vs. how he looks to one who sees him as he "really is." From the vantage of the first, he looks like a "real bad ass."

And that, in the eyes of the broader social order, is the predominating image they see. This image is used as justification to keep him ostracized from the broader social order.

Before, when I had asked, Trine had briefly acknowledged being afraid of the police. Now, after painting a picture of them vis a vis himself, when asked one word he would use to describe his feelings toward the police, he does not hesitate or hold back.

Q: If you had to use one word to describe your feelings toward the police, what would it be?

Trine: Fear, man, fear! I'm scared shitless of them bastards. I can smell 'em now. From two blocks away. Down at the beach, fishin, or jus' sittin on the bench watchin' folks walk by, I can smell 'em comin' and I run. Just like somebody was goin' to give me AIDS.

Q: What else are you afraid of--about the police?

Trine: Everything, man, just everything.

Q: Tell me some more about what you're afraid of about the police?

Trine: Shit man, I have nightmares bout those fuckin' dudes. You know what they been doin'? They been findin' tents belong to some guys, and they go in an' cut the goddamned tents. A dude'll come back to his tent and the sonofabitch is cut all to pieces. Now that's some shit. An they come through in the middle of the night, wakin' everybody up, and cuttin' up their tents and throwin' their shit around. Then if they don't leave, they haul their ass off to jail .

Q: What'd they do that for?

Trine: Just hasslin the dudes, man. They ain't got nothin' on em, or anything. Jus' hasslin. So it's gettin' to where if you don't have a place, you got to be scared of the cops. They goin' to get you for anything they can. An if they can't get anything on you, then they'll just hassle you. And they ain't nothin' you can do about it.

His response to the police is "fear." Trine is sensitive to the very presence of the police. In scanning the spaces he inhabits, he can see, or otherwise sense, their very negative presence. Wherever he is, while minding his own business, he can tell when they're around. Being powerless as he is, he has no option but to run. To emphasize his fear, he compares his fear of the police to the possibility of contracting AIDS. This becomes a principle: If homeless people don't do something that is a serious infraction of the law, he or she is vulnerable to harassment and arrest if only because they are present.

Trine links to slightly broader horizons to include other homeless people who have been victimized, and the extent to which the police go to make their lives miserable. They cut the tents of the homeless people (the small semblance of a home that they have) and needlessly wake them up at night (disturbing what little rest they have.) After the interview was over, another man compared their victimization to imaginatively finding a "little ol' lady" who falls down crossing the street, taking her cane from her and beating her with it because she fell down. The point is that if a person has no place, he or she is cut off from the resources that enable individuals to stand against gross injustice and trivial harassment alike.

In this portrayal, social and physical place are reflexive: one produces the other, and in Trine's narrative the whole is combined. Without physical place the sense is that one is nobody, and without social place, there are no options. Utilizing these particular horizons as he does, the police will go to any extremes. They will arrest homeless people for almost anything, and if that is not possible, they will resort to other means of harassment. There is nothing that can be done about it.

Q: Why is that?

Trine: Shit, man. We ain't nothin. We ain't got no...uh...we ain't got no...

Q: Power?

Trine: Yeah, we ain't got no power, and we ain't got no rights either. An the worst thing is not even that. The worst thing is that they can't wait to put you in jail. And man, that's bad. So, no freedom either. In and out, in and out. Sounds like fuckin', don't it? Well, it is. Grease up the ol' asshole, buddy, cause we are truly gettin' fucked within it.

Q: Tell me what's so bad about the jail. I mean, people say that a lot of homeless people try to get arrested so that they can go to jail. At least in jail, they say, you can get three meals a day, and a bed to sleep in. Do some homeless people welcome jail?

Trine: Not out here, man. Nobody out here wants to go to jail! Shit, that's why we're out here and not in town. If I wanted to be locked up, I'd go to that damned shelter. It's just like jail. Both of them you loose your freedom. An' that's bout all I got is my freedom. An the cops want to take that away.

As Trine interprets the strands of his life, he embraces his own powerlessness. From his perspective, there is no point in police actions toward

homeless people other than harassment. Then, in a very telling way, Trine elaborates a very low picture of the self of homeless people from his perception of the broader social world. "We ain't nothin." Homeless people have no power, no rights, no freedom. They are "nobodies" in a world of the domiciled. They are people to be used, laughed at, and ridiculed. From Trine's vantage point, the two prime resources by which people maintain their freedom, the most precious commodity they have, are power and rights, both of which are related to place. Without either of these, it becomes inevitable that homeless people will eventually be jailed, or kept off the streets in some way.

Trine reiterates that no one wants to be in jail, or in the center for the homeless, which is like jail. Both significantly deprive them of their freedom, and that is all they have left.

I turned the talk to relationships with other homeless people, asking whether or not they talked about these kinds of things out on the streets.

Q: Do ya'll talk about this stuff out here?

Trine: Yeah, sometimes.

Q: You have friends out here?

Trine: Yeah. I got lots of friends. See all those guys over there? They're my friends. I got lots of friends.

Q: What do they think, or feel, about the police?

Trine: Same thing. We all think the same thing. We all put up with the same bullshit, so we all think the same thing.

Q: Have any of them been arrested for DUI on a bicycle?

Trine: No, they ain't been arrested for that, but they been arrested for vagrancy, loiterin', trespassin', public intoxication, at 1:30 in the morning for public intoxication, standin' outside the Krystal at 10:00 at night, and gettin' arrested for loiterin'--all kinds of shit. Yeah, they all think the same thing. They all scared.

In response to my questions, Trine says that there is much talk among homeless people about these issues. Then, in response to another question, he says that he has many friends on the streets, as he references a particular group of men standing around and talking. To the horizons to which he links all of these men, friends and colleagues in misfortune, he connects their place to their commonality of experience in order to explain that they all thought the same things. This is a clear reference to shared linkages developed from biographically specific narratives. While none have been arrested for DUI on a bicycle, they have had things happen that, to Trine, and probably to them, were equally ludicrous. The linkages to these experiences have produced the same sense of fear in all of the others that it has in Trine. (They called Trine's name and he had to leave to get his ticket. The interview was over.)

Lula

One of the students at the University of North Florida asked that she be allowed to accompany me to talk with homeless people as she wanted to include some interviews with homeless people in a project she was working on for one of her classes. We arranged to meet at a local mission that shelters both homeless men and women. We spoke with several women for approximately

half an hour. Two of the women left, and a man came in and asked if he could join us. This left two women, Lula and Gina, and Terry, a male resident. We asked for permission to tape an interview, but the three were reluctant to be taped. Lula agreed to be formally interviewed, but without the tape recorder, and the other two were given the opportunity to leave. They chose to remain, and during the course of much of the interview they made extraneous comments, some of which seemed serious and others seemed calculated to distract. Without speculating as to their motivations on either count, the student and I, in reconstructing the interview, found that Lula had been sufficiently focused so that we were able to omit Gina and Terry's comments without affecting the conversation with Lula.

Lula was a shy young black woman who didn't want us to record her interview, but said that we could make notes. Both the student and I made as complete a set of notes as was possible. After the interview, we went to a restaurant and attempted to reconstruct the interview as closely as possible from our notes. We began reconstructing the text of the interview at a point we estimated to be about 10 minutes into the interview itself. The interview went beyond what we have reconstructed, but became confused as Gina and Terry's comments became more disruptive. The reconstructed interview begins after Lula had commented on her fears as life on the streets was becoming more and more risky.

- Q:** Life on the streets doesn't sound much like it's a place where most people would want to be. Are you ever afraid.
- Lula:** Yeah you 'fraid--if you smart, and if you straight, you're afraid. Fact is, if you got any sense, you scared to death.
- Q:** What kinds of things are you afraid of?
- Lula:** You're afraid of all kinds of things. You're afraid of dyin'!
- Q:** Dying?
- Lula:** Yeah. Dyin'! Like dis young woman, jus' bout three weeks ago, an' she was real pretty. A real pretty young black girl, in fact, she was stayin' down here a few months ago, and one day, she was out jus' messin' aroun' and I saw her [on a?] mornin', then the next mornin' somebody found her and she was all cut up. They'd cut her breasts off, an' they'd cut her all up down here [starts to point to her genital area] you know, down in her privates, and she was jus' cut up bad.
- Q:** Was she dead?
- Lula:** Dead! Course she was dead! What dey was left of her!
- Q:** Did the police know about this?
- Lula:** I don't know. How they goin' t' know? Nobody's goin' to miss her. I mean, she don't live no place. Who's goin' to tell the police. An' besides...Never mind. But it's not usually that bad. Jus' sometimes.

Lula articulates life on the streets as being a different world, a world without place, or a world different from the domiciled world in which, like many other homeless people, she saw residents of the streets as "nobodies." Like Henry, Lula sees street people as being of no concern to the police. When a homeless woman who is using drugs is murdered, this is all a matter of course

and is not even related to the police. Again, this is within the understanding of the police and the structured world that is held by homeless people. They see themselves as existing outside of the structured world and believe that they are discounted and valued as worthless.

All of this is in part due to being placeless. By being placeless, there is no set of people with whom regular relationships are formed, and hence no one to miss her. This is much like Dutch's description of shifting worlds. For Lula, when the world shifts, and it is constantly in flux, there are no expectations of permanence that would lead anyone to expect anyone to be anywhere. Relationships are limited to the moment. Thus, if one is found dead, there is no one to care, as caring is limited to who is present in the moment and to what one might experience at the hands of another in the moment. For this reason, a homeless person would not be "missing" because they wouldn't "be there," wherever "there" is. The world would have shifted, and the world of relevance would be the world of the present moment.

In a very real sense for Lula, placelessness is also timelessness. And her's was a life outside of conventional time and place as they were conventionally understood. Yet, it wasn't the sense of placelessness or of existing outside the normal constraints of time that was fearful for Lula. Her fear was fear of physical harm, the physical harm that was a normal occurrence in the world of the streets. In the following portion of the interview, we asked Lula to tell us more about life on the streets. After briefly describing that life as not

usually being frightening, she fixes her gaze on the centrality of men, and her own experience with them, concluding with her confusion as to who she could trust and who she couldn't.

Q: How is it usually?

Lula: Oh, jus' hangin' mos uh d time. You know. Jus doin' whatever. An sometimes, dat's scarey.

Q: How is that?

Lula: Well, you know, drugs an booze and men...

Gina: Yeah men!

Lula: You ought to know, Gina.

Gina: Now you hush yo mouf, girl.

Lula: Well, dat's right.

Q: What about men, Lula?

Lula: They bad!

Q: How are they bad?

Lula: Oh, man, they do all kinds of things. An they jus leaves you out there by yoself.

Q: Give me an example.

Lula: I don't know.

Q: Do you have a boyfriend?

Lula: I did. Til bout a week ago.

Q: What happened to him.

Lula: Oh he was bad. Real bad.

Q: Tell us about it.

Lula: Well, he wanted me to do it with him an his friends. He say it make him hot to see me with him and some more men. So, he say, "Lula, let's all get it on," an I say no, not wit all a you. An he say I had to, an I say "no I ain't neither." An he say he gon make me, an they all takes their clothes off, an I start to leave, an he grabbed me an make me go down on his friend, an I try to get up an he start beatin' me, an then the others start slappin' me, an they all takes their clothes off, an they say they gon cut me if I don' cooperate, so I did. I thought that was my time to die. An I was scared, cause I didn't know what they was goin' to do to me. An I wasn't even high. I guess dat why I was so scared.

Q: Did other things happen to you with your boyfriend?

Lula: Not with that one. He was jus my boyfriend bout a week.

Q: You have other boyfriends?

Lula: Right now?

Q: Yeah.

Lula: Nope

Q: Are you looking for another one?

Lula: Nope. Don want one. Leas right now I don't.

Q: Are you angry at men?

Lula: Not all of um. But, an see this is kinda hard to say, but I been wit so many, that I got confused about who is who, an when I gets, uh, when somebody want to go out wit me, if I been out wid em fore, I can't member whether they one of em I'm mad at or not. Some of em been real nice, but mos of em been bad, real bad. An if I ain't been out wid em, I don't know em, so I don know if they gon be bad or good. Mos of um probably be

bad. So, right now, I don't want no boyfriend. Not til I gets myself straight.

Q: Have a lot of men hurt you or abused you?

Lula: Both.

Q: They hurt you and abused you?

Lula: Yep, sho did. See this scar right here? That's where one hit me wit a beer bottle when I wouldn't do some really nasty things. That time I weren't high, neither.

Q: What about when you have been high? Have you been abused then?

Lula: Yeah, but see, when I be high, that stuff don't seem so bad. Or maybe its bad and that the reason I want to get blown away. I don't really know which one come first. Sometime I do tricks for drugs, but sometime I do it for money, and sometimes I do it cause I be scared.

As this part of the conversation shows, there is a linkage between life on the streets and the centrality of sex, drugs, and men. This life is the primary horizon to which she links when she speaks of her life. But this has been a brutal life. This is primarily seen in Lula's linkage to negative experiences and her consequent assessment that most men are bad. It has been her experience that most men are concerned only with having sex. This is as far as Lula goes. While she concedes that there is a dimension of power in their sexual pursuits, she does not see power as being a prime motivation. Only sex.

When Lula articulates her description of her last boyfriend and his demands on her, the nature of her relationship with men becomes much clearer. For Lula, relationships are only for the moment. They center on sex, much of it

injurious, much of it forced. When Lula didn't do what her 'boyfriend' wanted her to do, he felt entitled to force her into it.

Relationships constitute shifting worlds, with the entire world constantly being in flux as the players continue to change. "They just leaves you out there by yoself." There is much confusion about who the men in her life have been because of the number of them. They have been so numerous that she has no sense of who they all are or who to trust and who not to trust. Some of these men have both hurt and abused her. Although she doesn't mention it by name, Lula has been the victim of rape. But that's part of life on the streets for a woman.

The world also shifts by whether Lula has been high or not. When she's high, she sees herself as being periodically proactive in sexual pursuits and activities, and at times finding pleasure in them. But when she's not high, she finds herself wondering what she has done, or what has been done to her, or finding it difficult to believe what she may have done. Drugs and fear alternately shift her perspective and form her gaze in differing ways. The conversation then turns to how it is that Lula has done tricks out of fear.

Q: **How would you do tricks because you're scared?**

Lula: **You don't know much bout that life out dere on de streets, do you?**

Q: **No. Fraid not.**

Lula: **Well, you should spend some time out on the streets, then you know what we talkin bout.**

Q: This is about as close to that life as I want to get. (both laugh)
So, tell me about how you do tricks because you're scared.

Lula: It like this. If a man say he want to date you, an he say he pay you if you date him, an you go out wit him, then that's a trick. But if he keep payin you, then he think you his girlfriend, and you sposed to do what he want, an if you don't he get mad.

Q: What would he do if he gets mad?

Lula: All kind of things.

Q: Beat you up?

Lula: Yeah, an make you do whatever he want.

Q: Sexually?

Lula: Yeah. Dat's what dey all wants. Sex. An if you wants drugs, if you feel like you jus gotta get high, then you do mos anything to get a rock. An dey knows dat. So you jus a sittin target fo mens to come an make you do mos anything dey wants to do. Dey know all dey got to do is give you a rock. See, rock is like de devil's bait. As long as you wants dat, den you can jus foget doin what God want you to do. Cause you gon do what de devil want you to do cause you goin after de rock an not after what God wants.

Q: So wanting rock is to be vulnerable.

Lula: Yeah, dat's it. An to get high, you don' care no more. You jus go long wid whatever dey wants. Fact is you might even want to do it. But when you come down, you say "uuhh! Did I do dat?" An sometime, when you come down, you don' know where you been, or who you been with. You jus know you been doin' naughty stuff. An sometime you feel yoself, an you hurt, an you say "Uuhh, how did dat happen?" An sometime you cut, an sometime you bruised, an ain't no tellin' what. An you know what it might a been, cause you know what you seen happen to other girls, an you know some of dat musta happen to you, de way you feels.

Lula sees boyfriends as men who lay claim to her through threat and intimidation. Living outside of conventionally constructed time and space, it is not unusual that this should be true. Many men in her experience are primarily interested in sex. Although she has met some who are interested in her for other reasons, she has some difficulty in differentiating between the two types.

Q: If that kind of thing can happen to you, why do you stay out on the streets?

Lula: Cause dat's where de drugs is at. Dey out dere on de streets. An all you got to do to get em is to do some tricks.

Q: But if doing tricks is so dangerous, and if you put yourself in such a dangerous place to get drugs, why do you keep doing drugs?

Lula: That's why I'm gettin' straight. The Lord done saved me, an', praise the Lord, I'm not goin' out there anymore. I'm gettin' me a job, an' I'm gettin' me my own place, an' sometime, if it's the Lord's will, an if I can fin me a good man, I'm gonna be married again, an' I'm gonna have me a home, an' I'm gonna live my life out jus' praisin' the Lord.

When Lula looks backwards to her experience of life on the streets, she is well aware of the fear that she felt much of the time. Sometimes, she is aware of her fear because of what had happened to her while she was high, some of which she didn't remember, and some of which she has difficulty believing she did. At other times, being on the streets already, she sees doing tricks as a means of surviving in a hostile world. At one point in the conversation, the student asked Lula if she considered herself to be a prostitute, to which Lula replied that she was not. She told us that being a prostitute was "doin' it for

money," and that doing tricks were the "main thing that dey was thinkin' bout." Her "main thing" was drugs, and doing tricks was a part of the drug life for a woman.

It is against this background of drugs, men, and sex that Lula has discovered new vistas. Though not deeply rooted in time, and though not significantly reshaping her space, and certainly not giving her a permanent place as of yet, she sees herself as being saved, and this constitutes the substance of her future as she envisions it. In the interest of looking toward her new horizons, I asked Lula to elaborate not only what she had been saved from, but also what she had been saved to. (Gina and Terry continued to interrupt Lula. We omitted their comments in the following passage as this could be done without doing violence to Lula's narrative.)

Q: Is this what you are to be saved to?

Lula: What you mean?

Q: You say that you have been saved from this life..

Lula: No, not really. I just been saved. Now I'm goin' to have me a new life.

Q: What have you been saved from?

Lula: Sin, don't you know? Just plain sin.

Q: What do you mean by sin?

Lula: Livin' fo my appetites. Jus' doin as I pleases. Not lovin' the Lord, or doin what he tell me to do.

Q: And..?

Lula: And what?

Q: What about what he tells you not to do?

Lula: Dat what I been doin'. Oh I see what you mean...

Q: No. What do you mean? [both laugh]

Lula: What I been saved from? An I say sin. That what get me into the messes I been in. Its not that the Lord don't want me to have no fun, but sin is doin' those things that God don't want me to do, cause if I do em, I be in a whole lot of trouble, like what I been in.

Q: So...?

Lula: So the wages of sin is death, an that's where I been headin. But now, I be saved from death, like life on the streets. So, dat what I mean.

Q: Have you ever been saved before?

Lula: Well, not really, I don't think so. I been thinkin' I saved sometimes, but this time I was ready. This time, I really got saved.

Q: How do you know that?

Lula: I ain't out on the streets, am I? I ain't doin' tricks or doin' drugs, am I?

Q: So that's what you're saved from, life on the streets?

Lula: Yeah, an all the sin out there!

Q: Why do you think you were saved, or let me say it another way, why do you think you were "really" saved this time, and not like last time? or the other times?

Lula: Cause I was scared.

Q: Scared of what?

Lula: **Like I said, I be scared of dyin! [laughs]**

Q: **Are you still scared?**

Lula: **Not any more, I'm not.**

Because of a lifestyle that prompted her to fear for her life in the pursuit of drugs, Lula, in response to admittedly rather insistent prompting, finally admits to being open to being saved "this time" because of the primacy of fear in her life. At other times, she thought she was saved, but this time, fear has become a motivating factor. Her projected life of being saved and getting her a good man and a house, or place, are interpreted by her as a possible consequence of the saved life, which is, in a sense, the wages of being saved as opposed to the wages of sin. This transports her to a new and different world, one in which she is safe. There is a sense in which Lula posits a new law as opposed to the understood law of the streets, and that is the law that is based on what God wants her to do and not do. To do what God doesn't want one to do is to get into trouble. Gods law, as Lula sees it, is for one's own good. If you follow it and are saved, you are saved from "life on the streets,"

Chris

Chris, a black man in his mid 40's, had been on the streets for over five years. He is a Viet Nam veteran, and one who remembers the meaning of fear from that era. Mark, a student of mine, and I talked with him and several residents of the mission. He was interviewed by all of us, but primarily by one of

my "trainees", a person who had lived in prisons, shelters, and on the streets for several years. When we talked to Chris, he was somewhat withdrawn and not very conversational until Buck picked up the interview. The following is an extended segment from that conversation.

Q: Chris, tell us what you do all day.

Chris: I don't know. Jus' mess aroun'. Try to stay out of trouble.

Q: What kind of trouble?

Chris: Now don't get me wrong. I don't do nothin' wrong. But sometimes, trouble's just out there. An' it find you. You don't have to find it. An' trouble what make it scarey out there.

Q: What do you mean scarey?

Chris: Like all kind of things can happen. An who's to know. You jus' out there. You got no home, no place to go, nobody to go to. You just out there. That's why I stay down here, or over at the Salvation Army, or wherever I can as much as I can. I tries to watch my mission time.

Q: Like what kinds of things can happen to you?

Chris: Like the, what you call them, the farm trucks?

Q: You mean the migrant farm vans?

Chris: Yeah, dat's it.

Q: What about the migrant farm vans is scarey to you?

Chris: Well, like the van'll come down to the plaza, or to the labor pool, an' the man'll say, "You want a job?" an' you say, "Yeah, I want a job." an' he'll say, "You want some beer?" an' you say, "Yeah, man, you got some beer?" An' he'll say, "All you want. You just come on an' get in. We got work, we got beer, we got women, we got cigarettes." An' you say, "Man how I know you

ain't shittin' me?" An' he'll say, "Man, I ain't shittin' you. We got to have some help an' we're willin' to pay for it. Jus' come on an' hop on in an' you got yoself a job."

Q: Have you ever done this?

Chris: No, I never done this, cause I'm smarter than lots of 'um, but some of 'um gets in an that's the las' you hear of 'um.

Q: What happens to them?

Chris: Well, from what I hear, if they don't get enough help here, they go to St. Augustine... they go to St. Pete, an' by the time they leave St. Pete, they got enough, an' everybody done got drunk, an' he take everybody up to Carolina out on this farm. Then they stuck.

Q: Stuck? What do you mean?

Buck: He means that they put you up in a shack and charge you for it, and they charge you \$10.00 a meal, and they charge you \$3.00 for a beer, and \$3.50 for cigarettes, and by the time the week's out, you owe them more than they owe you. So you say to yourself "I'll stay another week," but then when that week's gone, you owe them more than you did last week.

Q: Why don't they leave?

Chris: Shit! I mean, excuse me, sir, I ought not to cuss, but--

Q: That's o.k.

Chris: You can't leave. You lyin in yo bed at night, what they call a bed, an' you tryin' to go to sleep, an' you hear de dogs barkin' an' de shots ring out, an' you wide awake. An' de nex' mornin' you looks to see who ain't there, an' you don' know, cause they got you all workin' in different fields ever day, an' mos' nights you don' know who s'posed to be sleepin' where, an' you don' know who got shot, if anybody. Cause sometimes, they don' shoot nobody, but they wants to make you think they did so you won't leave. An you stuck. Stuck till they lets you go.

- Q:** When do they let you go?
- Chris:** When you...
- Buck:** [interrupting briefly] When you, Oh, scuse me--
- Chris:** When you no good to them anymore. Like you hurt your arm or somethin', an' you can't work. So they take you out to the highway an' they give you five dollars, an' they tell you on your own.
- Q:** Has this ever happened to you?
- Chris:** No sir!
- Q:** Anybody you knew?
- Chris:** Not anybody I knows about. But it's happened to some of the men. We done hear bout it.
- Q:** How do you hear about it?
- Chris:** Well, sometimes they comes back, an' they tells somebody, an' the word jus' gets around. Everybody knows about it.
- Q:** Doesn't anybody report this to somebody? The police?
- Chris:** Who goin' to report it? An' if you did, who you goin' t' say it happened to. Don' nobody know you ain't there. It's like you ain't nobody, an' nobody knows you ain't there if you ain't nobody.

Chris identifies the horizon of fear as "trouble." He spends time in contemplating ways he can stay out of trouble. But for him, trouble is, in itself, "scary," and is personified as a "person" or force that lies in wait, always ready to attack the homeless man. Chris then gives a vivid description of "trouble" as he articulates the scenario in which homeless people are picked up by employees

of farms. These people lure homeless men into vans with the promise of answers to the basic needs and desires that they lack: jobs, food, beer, and sex. In their anxiety to find "work" and the means to acquire other necessities, wants and needs, some homeless men are depicted as responding to their promises and consequently falling prey to "employers" who are depicted as unscrupulous. They offer false promises in order to lure these men, and then take them to farms far away from their turf. Once they are there, the men, who have no money to begin with, are forced into using the "credit" that is offered for the basic necessities of their lifestyle, and by the time they begin receiving "pay" they already owe more than they are able to pay. Being caught in this "trap," they contemplate leaving, but are retained with tactics of fear and intimidation. From Chris' perspective, it is believable that the world for them is characterized by the possibility of "being shot," or being followed and attacked by dogs, or simply hunted as wild animals.

This fear is not grounded in Chris's own experience, but is grounded in his interpretation of the stories others tell that come to be myths of the streets. It is fear of a world that is constructed by a variety of narrated lives in their commonly constructed collective representations and typifications. This is a mode of communication that is common among homeless men. As other interviews demonstrate, the horizons upon which their gaze typically falls, in their thoughts and conversations, are horizons that are relevant to their own

lives--linkages to travel, experiences that produce fear, available resources, sex, drugs, discomfort, luck, and living accommodations.

As Chris links to the horizon of fear, he does so, like so many other respondents, from the perspective of being a "nobody." Although Chris does not link to this in this particular interview, this is another particular form of fear, as there is no recourse for one who is a "nobody." The overall depiction Chris narrates is one of people who are reduced to "invisible men" who have no place in the world of the domiciled, and with their placelessness there is no protection and no institutional linkage, leaving them to fend for themselves. Chris's only protection is that he is "smarter" than those who become victims in this and like situations.

Joseph

Often, when members of the homeless training group conducted an interview, it became a conversation between two homeless people. Such was the case when Robert interviewed Joseph as a part of the "training program." The interview was conducted while three other homeless "trainees" were present. At times they interjected their questions, or comments, into the conversation. Robert, who recruited Joseph for the interview, did so knowing our interest in the labor camps after we had talked with Chris. Joseph had been to one of the labor camps in one of the vans, and reflects a personal knowledge of that experience, even though he is somewhat reluctant to talk about it.

Joseph is a black man in his mid thirties who has been homeless for over five years. At one time, as a plumber, Joseph tells of owning a house that cost over \$75,000 in a middle class black area. He told us that drugs had been the reason that he had lost his job, family, and house. After we had talked for five or six minutes, the topic of the migrant labor camps came up. When Joseph began to talk about working at the labor camp, Robert pursued this by asking directly about Joseph's experience. While the interview does not contain specifics about Robert's experience in the migrant camp, it does make visible his understanding of the relationship between homeless men and these camps.

Joseph: I work out of the Labor Pool...I work on my...I leave the city...I just came back to the city yesterday. I'm on the bum rap deal messing with my camp...you know...not only do I work, but you know...labor pools, but I work also for myself. You know I have two or three skills...I'm a Certified [not audible...name being called in background]

Q: An you been to labor camp, right?

Joseph: Migrant camp?

Q: Yeah, migrant camp.

Joseph: Yeah, bout, um...let's see, bout maybe a year ago, I did.

Q: How'd you get to the migrant camp?

Joseph: Drugs, [not clear] got high on drugs and drunk, an uhh...

Q: How long was you ahh how long bout how long was you in the migrant camp?

Joseph: I ain't, ahh, I think maybe bout three months.

- Q: Okay...ahhh..when you say being in migrant camp, you mean like a farm camp...like where you picking cotton and things...
- Joseph: And all those things...fruit, or cutting onions or picking tobacco...
- Q: The majority of the time these migrant camps out there, they know when, like people who are kind of down on their luck and ahhh might not have a place to stay or a certain income...that's what they look for huh?
- Joseph: Yes, cause see they know that these people are wounded. They are weak. They know they're down on their luck; they know they don't have no place to stay. It's one of the experiments..okay.. True they have no...no where to stay; they have no income; no food; no nothing so these people are prey to them. They easily come there and say okay come to this mission, okay. Let's get that guy there, let's get this guy here. Take them to a migrant camp, let them make us about \$50 a week or whatever, charge them this or that...you know, this...this figure, they use you up...
- Q: Yeah...yeah
- Joseph: You know. This was one of the experiences that...that I'm displaying now to a brother I see trying to get on the van. It's nowhere going to a migrant camp. You know...
- Q: But I can imagine, like you said that when people down on their luck and ain't got no where to stay, and...and they hungry today and somebody from the migrant camp might come and tell them...say...hey, come up here and process this box of tobacco...or whatever..pick this cotton and I'll give you somewhere to stay and something to eat. You know...let you make a little money; and ... when you're down on your luck, and you kind of looking for somewhere to lay your head, somethin' to eat and make money too, all that sound kind of good until you get there. And then, I guess they realize that if something happen to y'all...I guess the foreman or whoever is over the migrant camp, don't really care, because he thinking you in a situation that you can't...do you...you can agree with me here...in the situation that you in, that the people in the

farm camp, think that y'all can't do anything cause maybe your intelligent...you might not be [unintelligible] enough, y'all might not have no family or you ain't got no money; so they try to take advantage of you sometimes. Is that right?

Joseph: Yes, that's basically, that's basically what...ummm...they really think.

Q: Yeah

Joseph: The homeless...the homeless are...a homeless person is just ain't a person that goes into a drug area and have \$900 or \$800 in their pocket and never bought no drugs. You see, a homeless person is an open prey.

Q: Yeah...

Joseph: To somebody that got a big job going on and he could be where he could manipulate him until he get his job done for little of nothing....

Q: Yeah...

As Joseph and Robert discuss the migrant camps, they portray the process of picking up homeless men as exploitation of the weak and defenseless. The meanings that inform their discussion of these people are gleaned from how the people who drive the vans select "recruits" from among those who have no place to stay and no food to eat, etc. It is interesting that Joseph describes these people as wounded. They are down on their luck and hence become vulnerable.

At the same time there is an implied recognition of the role drugs and alcohol play in making some homeless people vulnerable to such exploitation. Drugs and alcohol, for many homeless people, are part of their taken for granted

world, and are forces that victimize. Drugs and alcohol are not seen as extras or luxuries, but rather as necessary ingredients of their lives. Over and over again, in conversations and interviews, these men talk about drugs and alcohol as coping devices that enable them to either cope with low self esteem, or with the misery and discomfort of their homeless condition. In referring to these homeless people as "prey," Joseph is reflecting what is a shared linkage to experiences that evoke feelings of fear and is derived from biographically specific linkages, accomplished in much the same way as in Lula's experience when she talks about being a target.

Having had the experience of going to the migrant camp, Joseph looks at his present and future horizons from this perspective. In this "new" role, Joseph takes upon himself the responsibility for warning other homeless men about this experience. It is as though this has become a part of his own moral order to protect others whom he sees as being "prey" in much the same way as he saw himself.

CHAPTER 6 I'D RATHER BE ALONE

As we drive or walk through our largely urban world, we are often struck by the sights of whom we perceive to be single homeless people lying on park benches, pushing shopping carts, or standing in lines at soup kitchens. For many, these images form views of homeless people as being loners.

Much has been written about affiliation among homeless people. Bahr (1973) studied this issue and found that the homeless are atomized and disconnected from social affiliation. More recently, La Gory, Ritchey, and Fitzpatrick (1991) found that affiliation was much higher among the homeless than formerly thought. From what I have read, I expected that either, or both, of these may well be true, depending in part on the sample, the measures of affiliation, and the variation in meaning of affiliation.

In this chapter, the common theme that runs throughout the interview texts is isolation, or aloneness, in one form or another. By attending to the biographically specific linkages these people make to experiences of broken or attenuated relationships, the shared linkages to this theme become visible. As Henry said in Chapter 5, without spatial and temporal structures it is difficult to establish relationships in the first place. However, with the prevalence of drugs,

alcohol, violence, shame, fear and other negative qualities of life on the streets, it is often thought to be the better way to be alone than with the available companionship. Thus fear or shame characterize much of the aloneness. On the other hand, some of the respondents, like Trine, link the meaning of their lives on the streets to feelings of friendship, or even to experiences of the familial, with other homeless people but are in fact isolated from the structured world of the domiciled.

The narrative interviews in this chapter demonstrate the strained nature of any existing relationships and at the same time the absence of relationships that may seem normal to those living in the domiciled world. In either case, the interviews are built around linkages that form the theme, or horizon of meaning, of loneliness and isolation.

Discovering Indigenous Meaning

One of the student volunteers who had worked in both the Homeless Coalition's count of the homeless, and who was doing a series of qualitative interviews for a class at the university, went downtown with me to observe and talk with some homeless people. It was soon to become clear what the indigenous meaning was of "I'd rather be alone." Tommy, one of the members of my "research team" met us at a short-order restaurant and we planned our afternoon. The student said that she would particularly like to interview women. Her interests likewise coincided with mine as I was interested in relationships,

among other things. Tommy argued that it would be almost next to impossible since by the afternoon, most were either somewhere asleep, "restin' up for the night," or were possibly in a hotel not far away turning tricks and saving up money for the night, or "jus' doin' some drugs and gettin wasted."

Tommy's projection of where the women might be proved to be partially correct in that there was a dearth of women who were known to be homeless on the streets in the area that homeless people typically frequented. The one exception was a young black woman, who looked like a child in the face, but whose dress was suggestive of a woman much older. She sat on a large stone on the grass between the sidewalk and the street. When Tommy saw her, his response was that we probably wouldn't want to talk with her as she sometimes "wasn't right." In Tommy's words, "She ain't zactly hittin on all eight." Nevertheless, she was regarded as a homeless woman, and the student and I felt that it would be helpful to talk with her as she represented a population to which we had little access. Tommy agreed to introduce us to her.

As we approached her, she looked frightened until she recognized Tommy. While she didn't call him by name, she looked at him as though he were familiar to her. His first words seemed to set her even more at ease. "Hi. I ain't seen you around the mission much lately. Where you been?" She smiled a smile that appeared to reveal a slight level of anxiety. Tommy quickly seemed to become comfortable, and introduced us to Marie. The student asked whether or not we might talk with her, and she agreed by saying, "I reckon so. I ain't got

nothin' else to do." We went back to the restaurant where we bought cokes and coffee, and a hamburger and shake for Marie.

Marie

The following excerpts come from an hour and a half interview, much of which centered around Marie's goals, or lack of them, and why she didn't feel she could ever reach them. The excerpts that I am including center around Marie's relationships. During large segments of the interview that dealt with deeply personal or explicitly sexual conversations, Tommy and I absented ourselves. With a few exceptions that are included for illustrative purposes, these parts of the conversation were not included.

The conversation with Marie was difficult because of her lack of communication skills. She answered our questions willingly, but, in the sections included, said little more than what was needed for minimal answers. I began the conversation with a variation of the generic first question from the interview guide.

Q: Marie, tell us about yourself. Tell me about your life, what important things have happened to you.

Marie: I don't know. Nothin' I guess. I mean, nothin' happens to me that's important.

Q: What do you mean when you say nothing happens that's important to you?

Marie: I mean just regular stuff. Like I was born, and I sleeps, and I eat, and I live, and that's bout all.

As Marie began speaking about what was important to her, it was clear that any horizons that she could link together, or to her present situation, would be perceived by her as totally unimportant to us. As she spoke, there was an affect of sadness and resignation in her voice and in her facial expression. Her voice was flat and her articulation was monotonal. Marie's facial expression seemed almost disconnected from what she articulated.

As the conversation turned to relationships, Marie's affect indicated that she withdrew emotionally behind a barrier that seemed impenetrable. As we listened to her answers, there was much more that was left unsaid than what was said, but these were things Marie was reluctant to articulate. If there were horizons of meaning, they were distant and clouded by other, more painful memories. Ellen's continued conversation with Marie continues as it is quoted in a rather lengthy portion.

Q: Do you live with your family.

Marie: No.

Q: Where do you live?

Marie: Not any place.

Q: Do you not live any place, or any one place?

Marie: What you mean?

Q: Do you have a regular place where you sleep? Where you keep your clothes and your other belongings? Where you get your mail?

Marie: I don't guess I gets no mail.

- Q: What about sleeping? Do you have a regular place to sleep?
- Marie: Sometime I do, sometime I don't.
- Q: Do you stay with your family sometimes?
- Marie: I don't know. I guess so. Sometimes.
- Q: Do you have a family?
- Marie: I don't know. I guess so.
- Q: Mother?
- Marie: Yeah.
- Q: Daddy?
- Marie: I don't know.
- Q: You don't know whether or not you have a daddy, or you don't know who he is?
- Marie: I don't know if I got one. My momma never told me.
- Q: Brother?
- Marie: Not any more.
- Q: What do you mean not any more?
- Marie: He dead.
- Q: Dead! How did he die?
- Marie: He got shot?
- Q: How long ago did he get shot? You know, when did he die?
- Marie: Last year.
- Q: How old was he? When he got shot?

- Marie: I don't know. 'Bout sixteen years old, I think.
- Q: Do you have any sisters?
- Marie: I don't know?
- Q: Marie, do you not know whether or not you have sisters, or don't you want to talk about it?
- Marie: Whether they's my sisters or not. We calls them sisters, but they say they not.
- Q: What do they say they are?
- Marie: Aunties.
- Q: Why would they say they're your aunties if you say they're your sisters.
- Marie: Cause they lives with us, but they say they not my sisters cause they don't have the same daddy as me.
- Q: Who is their mother?
- Marie: My momma.
- Q: Who is their daddy?
- Marie: I don't know. I think my uncle is. Or maybe my uncle's daddy.
- Q: Did your mother live with your uncle?
- Marie: Sometime she did.
- Q: Did she live with your uncle's daddy.
- Marie: Sometime she did.
- Q: Where does your uncle live?
- Marie: In the jail.

- Q:** How long has he lived in the jail?
- Marie:** For a long time.
- Q:** Have you ever seen him?
- Marie:** Yeah.
- Q:** How long has it been since you've seen him?
- Marie:** When he stayed with us sometimes.
- Q:** Did he work?
- Marie:** No.
- Q:** How did he earn money/
- Marie:** I don't know. I think he sold drugs.
- Q:** Did he give you drugs?
- Marie:** Sometimes. But mostly, he gave 'em to my momma.
- Q:** Do you have any other family? Grandma? Grandpa?
- Marie:** Nope. My grandma's dead, and my grandpa's dead.
- Q:** Did you ever live with them?
- Marie:** I lived with my grandma til she died. My granddaddy already dead.
- Q:** How long did you live with your grandma?
- Marie:** From when I was a little girl till she got sick and died.
- Q:** How old were you when your grandma got sick and died?
- Marie:** Bout 10.

Q: Did your mother live with your grandmother?

Marie: Sometimes.

As Marie answers Ellen's questions regarding members of her family, the picture that was painted was, for us who listened, one that was at best confusing and that cast Marie's familial relationships into an ill-defined situation that resulted in Marie's confusion as to what exactly constituted family (Gubrium and Holstein, 1990). Her's had been a life surrounded by drugs, informal prostitution, and the violent death of a brother. Yet, she speaks of no awareness of the effects of this environment on her life.

At our prompting, and in response to our very direct questions, Marie speaks in brief phrases to link to experiences that were, to us, somewhat unusual, if not horrifying. Her tenuousness regarding her family, or whether or not she had one, whether or not she ever stayed with her family, and who her daddy was all exhibited a lack of clarity as to the specific horizons that she linked together, or horizons to which she linked for the purposes of our conversation. Up until this point, she doesn't attribute any particular significance to having a family, of knowing who her family members are, or the meaning or significance of family linkages. When asked about siblings, her brother in particular, she states simply that she doesn't have one any more. And equally simply, she also says that her brother is dead, and finally that he was shot, even though this event would have occurred within a year of the interview. Her confusion about sisters has as much to do with not knowing what a sister is as it

does with knowing whether or not these women are blood kin or not. They live with her, when she lives at home, wherever that is, but they don't claim kin with her as they have a different father. In the scenario that is presented to us, Marie's relationships are defined for us by what people say constitutes, or do not constitute, specific relationships. The role of the uncle, whoever he is, or the uncle's father, with Marie's mother living with each one of them at particular times, further clouds the picture. While this depiction is confusing to the hearer, or the reader, it seems to have been no less confusing to Marie. The primary difference was her matter of fact acceptance of the confusion as at least sufficiently normal so that it called for no justification or explanation.

The one set of relationships that has been minimally stable in Marie's life has been her relationship with her grandmother. However, any linkage to her is again minimal as the grandmother has been dead for almost half of Marie's life and her grandfather has been dead longer than that.

The horizons to the familial to which Marie links her understanding of intimate relationships are such that any replication of those meanings in the ways she shapes her present life are difficult to comprehend from the viewpoint of anyone who links their meaning of family to more conventional experiences. This perspective suggests that the horizons of meaning of the familial have little or nothing to do with nurturance, intimacy, or boundedness, or any of the other qualities of the familial that we often assume.

As the conversation proceeded, the biographical specifics to which Marie linked her understanding of the family grew even more confusing, as we inquired in more depth.

Q: Do you have any other family?

Marie: Nope. Jus' my babies.

Q: How many babies do you have?

Marie: I don't know. Maybe two. Maybe four.

Q: You don't know how many babies you have?

Marie: Not exactly.

Q: How can you not know how many babies you have?

Marie: I thinks some of 'em were twins, or something.

Q: Where do they live?

Marie: I don't know.

Q: Do you know who their daddy is/

Marie: Not exactly.

The idea of "babies" is important to Marie. In relating her experience of her babies, she is careful to include them as family, although she doesn't know how many she has had or where they are now. This remains a constant theme in her story, to which she returns again later in this text.

At this point in the conversation, Ellen stopped taking notes and spent several minutes talking with Marie about the "facts of life." Tommy and I went for more coffee, and then went outside for a smoke. When we returned, Ellen was

resuming the interview, and asked Marie about any hopes or dreams she might have for a family of her own.

Q: Would you like to have your own family with your “babies” and a husband?

Marie: I don’t know.

Q: If you live with your “family,” who would you like to live with?

Marie: I would like to live with some babies, my momma, my aunties, some friends, an’ some mens,

Q: And where would you like to live?

Marie: I don’t know.

Q: Would you like to live with all of these people in one place?

Marie: Yes...I mean, I don’t know.

Q: Have you ever lived with this kind of family in one place?

Marie: No, not really. But sometimes I lives with some of ‘em.

Q: What about your granny? You know, when you lived with her?

Marie: That wasn’t no family.

Q: Why would you say that?

Marie: There wasn’t no babies there.

Without any consistent structural or experiential horizon to which she can link a specific meaning of family, Marie doesn’t know whether or not she has a family. It is as though “family” is an irrelevant term to Marie. She references people as family by title designation without any particular reference to role or

status. But titular designation is only a form of designating others, or constructing fictive family relationships. It does not seem to describe any particular type of relationship; kin, primary, or otherwise. But as the conversation continues, one thing begins to stand out regarding Marie's understanding of the familial. As she the conversation continued, Marie referenced her "babies" as family, and this claim spoke to at least a small degree of conventionality in her understanding of the familial.

To say that the familial themes that informed Marie's understanding of family were blurred and confused would be an understatement. Intimate relationships as considered in the conventional world were outside the range of her comprehension. What filled the locus of her gaze was instead a haphazardly sequenced series of arrangements that were situated in disconnected spatio-temporal intersects, and in which constancy, consistency, orderliness, or nurturance were notably absent. The one thing that sticks in her mind is that family included the presence of babies. Ironically, Marie does not see her life with her grandma as familial, even though, according to her own understanding, she was herself the "baby" in the home.

As Ellen turned the conversation back to where Marie stays, or sleeps, Marie indicated more about her understanding, or lack of understanding, of intimate relationships.

Q: Marie, you have to sleep someplace. Where do you sleep?

Marie: I sleeps in different places?

- Q:** Where'd you spend the night last night?
- Marie:** With Bo?
- Q:** And who is Bo?
- Marie:** He's my boyfriend.
- Q:** And where did you and Bo sleep last night?
- Marie:** In the woods.
- Q:** How old is Bo?
- Marie:** I don't know, exactly. Maybe 30. Maybe 35. He's old.
- Q:** Is Bo your baby's's daddy?
- Marie:** No. He don't know nothin' bout my babies.
- Q:** How long has Bo been your boyfriend?
- Marie:** Bout three days. Maybe two days.
- Q:** How did Bo get to be your boyfriend?
- Marie:** He jus say if I show him my titties and my pussy, then I might can stay with him.

At this point in the conversation, Ellen became anxious (as she noted during our post interview discussion) and for the next 10-15 minutes, she and Marie had a conversation regarding privacy and intimacy, most of which was carried by Ellen, and which seemed to be totally beyond the grasp of Marie to understand. From Marie's perspective, there was no clear boundary between her own body and that of men around her. Her body was almost detached from her sense of self. She seemed to see her sexual attributes as no more than

barter to be used in the quest for survival and companionship, similar to the ways that others used cigarettes or sandwiches. Eventually, Ellen returned the conversation to family members and relationships. The next portion of the conversation begins to make visible a world in which multiple boyfriends, but no stability in relationships, occurs.

Q: Did you have another boyfriend before Bo?

Marie: Yeah.

Q: What was his name?

Marie: Which one?

Q: Did you have more than one?

Marie: Yeah. Lots of 'em.

Q: Did you live with any of them?

Marie: Sometimes? And sometimes I just stayed with em some and they give me some money cause I do tricks with 'em.

Q: Money?

Marie: Yeah.

Q: How much money?

Marie: I don't know. Maybe bout five dollars, or ten dollars.

Q: Do you ever do tricks with them if they don't give you money.

Marie: Nooo. I lets them do tricks with me but I don't do no tricks with them unless they gives me some money.

When the conversation turns to Marie's boyfriends and intimate relationships, it becomes clear that she had multiple boyfriends and yet no sense of intimacy with any of them. Marie's life centered around boyfriends and doing tricks effectively with whatever man she came across. Men in general had access to her body, but there was an internalized prohibition against "doing tricks with (or for?) them, unless for remuneration. She will, however, allow them to "do tricks" with her in return for companionship, a place to stay, or other unstated reasons. The use of her body and doing tricks is a part of her taken for granted world. It is just the way things are. It remains unclear in this text as to exactly what constituted a trick. Yet in the entire conversation, there was no mention of prostitution or hooking or other terms that would indicate any negative social or personal evaluation. As she recounts the sketchy details of her relationship with her mother, this was the way in which she had come to see the world, as her mother had taught her a lifestyle of doing tricks for money.

Q: Where did you learn to do tricks for money?

Marie: From my momma. Sometimes she let me do tricks with her boyfriends and she let me keep some of the money.

Q: Do you ever see your momma?

Marie: Yeah, sometimes.

Q: Where does she live?

Marie: Different places. Sometimes with Joey, sometimes with Tailbird, sometimes with different peoples.

Q: Does she live in a house?

Marie: Sometimes.

Q: Do you ever stay with her?

Marie: Sometimes.

Q: How often do you stay with her?

Marie: I don't know. Whenever I see her and she want me to stay with her.

Q: Does your momma work?

Marie: I don't know. I don't think so.

Q: Where does she get money? How does she get money to eat?

Marie: She get money from the gov'ment.

Q: Welfare?

Marie: I don't know. I don't think so. I don't know nothin about it.

Marie's mother's life seems to be much the same as Marie's, and appears to have been the primary model for Marie's life. Like Marie, the mother's life seemed to center around doing tricks and other survival seeking activities. There is no seeming concern for housing, for work, or for stability. In her relationship with Marie, she not only provided a role model, but an introduction to men with whom to do tricks. In the process, her mother also taught her that to do tricks was a means of earning an income. Doing tricks and otherwise maintaining superficial sexual relationships with men was at the center of the relationship between Marie and her mother. Thus, when she thinks of her mother, she connects her with the sexual dimension of their relationship that was

central to it. As Ellen talked with Marie, there was no mention of drugs, so there is no way of knowing whether or not Marie was actively using drugs or not, although later in the conversation, there is a brief mention of at least minimal prior drug usage.

For a brief time, the conversation turns to school and Marie's age. That does not last long, however, as her vistas, in conjunction with Ellen's questions, quickly bring the interview back to Marie's web of relationships.

Q: Do you go to school?

Marie: I did, long time ago, but not anymore.

Q: Why don't you go to school?

Marie: I don't have to.

Q: Why not?

Marie: Cause I'm too old.

Q: How old are you, Marie?

Marie: Nineteen.

Q: How old were you when you had your babies?

Marie: I don't know. Maybe twelve. Maybe thirteen.

Q: Where did you live when you had your babies?

Marie: Different places. I lived with my uncle and his momma when I had my first baby.

Q: Was your uncle your babies' daddy?

Marie: I don't know.

- Q:** Did you sleep with him?
- Marie:** Naw, I didn't sleep with him, not by his self.
- Q:** Who else did you sleep with?
- Marie:** I don't know. I can't remember.
- Q:** Did you have sex with your uncle?
- Marie:** Sometimes.
- Q:** Who else did you have sex with?
- Marie:** Lots of mens.
- Q:** Marie, how old were you when you started having sex?
- Marie:** I don't know.
- Q:** Do you remember the first time you had sex?
- Marie:** No.

In a search for other themes around which the conversation might focus, Ellen turns to Marie's educational experience. In the course of the brief questioning, she establishes Marie's age, which is surprising, as Marie looked to be between the ages of 13 and 15. This focus on education turned out to be but a brief digression, however, as the conversation moved back to Marie's babies, the babies' father(s), and her sexual activities. Even here, Marie does not seem to have a clear understanding of what causes babies, and it is even less apparent who the babies' father(s) might be. If one locates her age at approximately 13 years old at the time of the birth of first baby(s), then her sexual activity began some time before that, possibly even in early childhood.

Ellen continues this conversation for a few more minutes, and then attempts to look to other horizons to ascertain what might happen to Marie in the future.

Q: Will you just keep staying with different men and in different places? Or are you going to find a permanent place to stay?

Marie: What you mean?

Q: Like one place to stay all the time.

Marie: I don't reckon.

Q: Do you want a regular place to stay?

Marie: It would be nice. But I don't have one.

Q: When you're not staying with Bo, or one of your boyfriends, where do you stay?

Marie: Down to the mission, sometimes, and sometimes with my momma, and sometimes I just lay down and sleep.

Q: Which mission do you stay in when you stay in a mission?

Marie: Trinity, City Rescue Mission, anywhere I can.

Q: Do you have any close friends?

Marie: I don't know. I don't never think bout that.

Q: Do you have any girlfriends? Girls or women that you do fun things with.

Marie: I got some friends that I do tricks for sometimes, or sometimes we do tricks on each other. Like me an my momma.

In the middle of a conversation about housing, and where Marie stays, Ellen asks about friends. What should not have been a surprise by this time was

not only surprising, but, to Ellen, distressing. Marie and her mother and other friends, possibly her mother's friends, periodically engage in homosexual activities. As Marie recounts this simply in this one sentence, it becomes apparent that she places homosexual activity with her mother and her friends in a different category than her sexual relationships with men. Doing tricks for and with women who are friends is simply regarded as a part of, and very possibly a central part of, the "friendship" relationship with no remuneration expected or given. We did not pursue this further, but asked more about Marie's mother, and then the conversation turned back to friendship.

Q: How old is your momma, Marie?

Marie: About thirty, or maybe thirty two. I don't know exactly.

Q: So she was young when you were born?

Marie: Yeah. She look like me.

Q: You mean when you were born?

Marie: Yeah, and she do right now. She real pretty. Sometimes she tell people I'm her friend, or her sister.

Q: What about her friends? Are they your friends too?

Marie: Yeah.

Q: Are most of her friends men or women?

Marie: Most of her friends is men. But some of em is womens. And they my friends too.

Q: What does the word "friend" mean to you, Marie?

Marie: I don't know. I don't never think about that.

- Q:** Can you think about it and tell me what you think?
- Marie:** I guess it means that you hang out with somebody.
- Q:** Does it mean that you care about what happens to them?
- Marie:** I guess so. I guess it means that you care about what happens to them. I don't know exactly.
- Q:** Do you have people you hang out with and who care about what happens to you?
- Marie:** Sometimes.
- Q:** How many do you have?
- Marie:** My momma.
- Q:** Do you see your momma very much?
- Marie:** No.
- Q:** How do you get in touch with your momma?
- Marie:** I go to some of the places where she stays.
- Q:** How do you know where she stays?
- Marie:** I know where her boyfriends is.
- Q:** Does she ever try to contact you?
- Marie:** She try, but she don't ever know where I'm at. She tell me to come and see her.
- Q:** Why do you think she wants you to come see her?
- Marie:** So I can help her get some money--and drugs.
- Q:** Do you think she cares about what happens to you?
- Marie:** Sometimes she does.

Q: Do you care about what happens to her?

Marie: Yeah. I guess.

When Marie thinks about her mother, she thinks of her mother as being pretty and looking young, so much so that Marie almost has a sense of pride in her mother at times introducing her as a "friend," or sister, although she does not know her age. Whatever Marie's mother's age, the arithmetic suggests that she, like Marie, was extremely young when her sexual activity began and when she gave birth to her first child.

As we began to explore the meaning of friendship for Marie, we began with her mother's friends, and Marie, recalling her mother's friends, said that the composition of the friendship circle includes both men and women. But when the conversation was particularly directed at the meaning of friendship, this was effectively framed by Ellen, without any real sense of its meaning being originally conveyed by Marie. She says that it's something she never thinks about.

When pressed, the only "friend" Marie specifically mentions is her mother, although she sees her mother only infrequently. When she does see her, she stays with her mother at her boyfriends' houses, but she also asks Marie to come to see her. When Ellen asked why she wanted Marie to visit her, Marie pointedly says so that she can help her get money and drugs. Although the comparison is incomplete, this is reminiscent of another story in which an "ugly woman" who wants drugs obtains the help of a pretty girl to help her acquire them. For Marie's mother, Marie is the source of additional income and drugs.

Q: Is there anybody else you care what happens to?

Marie: Bo.

Q: Where is Bo now?

Marie: I don't know.

Q: Are you waiting for him now?

Marie: Yeah, if he come back.

Q: Did he tell you to wait here for him?

Marie: Nope, He left this morning when we was down in the woods.

Q: Did he say that he would come back?

Marie: No. He didn't say nothin'. He just left.

Q: Were you afraid when he left?

Marie: No. I wasn't 'fraid. I just got up and went and got me some breakfast.

Q: Where did you eat breakfast?

Marie: Over here to the Burger King.

Q: Did Bo give you some money to buy breakfast with?

Marie: No. I give him some money.

Q: How much did you give him?

Marie: 'Bout ten dollars.

Q: And how much did you have left?

Marie: I don't know exactly. 'Bout five dollars, maybe.

Q: You gave him ten dollars, and you kept five? Did he take the ten dollars from you, or did you just give it to him?

Marie: I give it to him.

Q: Why did you do that?

Marie: Cause he my boyfriend.

Q: Where did you get fifteen dollars?

Marie: Tailbird give it to me.

Q: Did you do tricks with him for the money?

Marie: I did three tricks on him and he give me some money.

Q: Three tricks at one time?

Marie: No. Let's see. One trick two day ago, and two tricks yesterday.

Q: Will you spend tonight with Bo?

Marie: If he come back.

Q: And if he doesn't come back, where will you stay?

Marie: Down to the mission, if I can.

Q: And if you can't stay at the mission, where will you stay?

Marie: I don't know.

In this final segment of the interview, Marie mentions the only other person whom she cares about, and that is Bo. As we asked about Bo, Marie's vistas could not extend to the distant past, as the relationship is only two or three days old. But even here, her horizons tell of significant characteristics that we

suspected characterized many of Marie's relationships. In the early morning hours, Bo suddenly leaves Marie in the woods. He leaves, however, with the bulk of her money. How she earned it is neither new or, for her, unique. What is significant, at least for us, is that she has been used both sexually and financially. But there is more to the story. Without saying where she is to meet him, Marie is waiting for Bo, that is, if he comes back. If he doesn't come back, she doesn't know where she will spend the night--possibly at one of the missions if she's allowed to. If not, it may well be another night alone on the streets or in the woods.

In talking with Tommy after the interview, he noted that Marie is not usually allowed to stay at the mission as she is prone to openly engage in sex acts with both men and women without any discretion. She has offered to engage in oral sex with men in the parking lot behind the center in daylight while others were free to watch, and has been caught on several occasions having sexual activity just before or after church services when she had access to men.

Our interview with Marie was almost like a guessing game, in which each bit of the story is painfully teased out until an overall picture emerges. What structure was found in her story emerges as much from the direction of our questioning as from her own narration.

As we talked with Marie, we had the sense that Tommy was correct when he says that Marie is retarded. However, it is not clear that this is the "cause" of her simplistic view of life, or whether her "retardation" is the product of an

extremely confused structure of intimate relationships. It is perhaps that Marie has had a strange kind of sheltered life with her mother and her grandmother, and that within the confines of that sheltered existence, she never developed a sufficiently structured world view to enable her to develop any kind of clear sense of self. Marie is not clear about the underlying nature of any of her relationships. They are without consistent definition, unless that consistency resides in sexual activity. As she responds to questions, there is no sense of closeness or of distance. She simply exists, going from day to day, place to place, man to man. But one might expect little else when the contours of her life are linked to such horizons.

Jimmy

Jimmy is a 46 year old black man. He is physically nondescript. He is medium height, medium weight, and dressed in jeans, a t-shirt, and sneakers. Jimmy is a quiet man who keeps to himself, even when in a group. Jimmy has a tendency to continually glance around at any people who might be within any kind of close proximity as though he is monitoring their actions and watching for any hostile movements from them.

We met Jimmy in Confederate Park. He was alone when we met him. He had come over because we had some sandwiches that we were passing out. At first he hung back on the periphery of the group with whom we were talking, but then he ventured over and began to participate in the conversation. He was told

by one of the team what we were doing and asked if he would like to talk. At first he was reluctant, but after he took a sandwich and a soft drink, he began to enter into the conversation. The interviewer again asked him if he would be willing to be interviewed. He consented and agreed to the interview being taped. After the interviewer re-introduced him to the project and asked him to tell him about his life, Jimmy said that he was 46 years old and he began to talk about how he had become homeless. Surprisingly, Jimmy was transparent as to his use of drugs. It had been drugs that had caused him to lose everything and become a "resident" of the streets. Jimmy maintained throughout the interview that drugs were "of the devil," that drugs were the source of people losing their sense of responsibility, and as a result of his understanding of drugs, if he were to get his life straight, he would have to live his life alone, unable to trust other homeless people, unable to relate to former friends who were a part of the domiciled world, and unable to trust or find resources in the government or government agencies such as drug treatment facilities. After the interview had gone on for about ten minutes, the interviewer asked about how he spent his day. In the conversation that followed, Jimmy reflected on a world in which trust was either impossible or not wise.

Q: Well, I mean, how do you spend your day, where do you go
You say you go, you've been to Salvation Army, like is that
how you get food, you hear about certain feedings....

Jimmy: Well, they, well mostly, you need a bed...a bath and a bed...

Q: Really...

Jimmy: Some place to sleep; rest your head, off the streets

When Jimmy thinks about needs, he thinks about personal needs: a way to get off of the streets. Then he is asked pointedly if he spends time alone, or with friends.

Q: What'd you think about when you're ...I mean, do you spend a lot of time alone or do you spend time with friends...

Jimmy: The best way to be is by yourself....

Q: You do spend most of your time alone...

Jimmy: That's the way I do...

Q: So what are you? a grouch? Some of these guys don't look like they're alone. Some of them don't...

Jimmy: Some of them not ...I mean...you know birds of a feather flocks together ...they say...but I here by myself, cause I done been through that drug thing; I know what it has done to me, and I try my damn best to stay away from it. You know...that's why I do better by myself.

Jimmy's lived experience has been so completely dominated by drugs that when he thinks about the horizons that inform his present life, it is almost impossible for him to avoid this topic, or look to any other significant horizon against which to locate himself. He sees his problem with drugs as partially a result of his association with other people on the streets. As he scans the specific contours of his life, and the options available to him on the streets, he specifies a preference for a life alone and apart from other homeless people, seeing them as "birds of a feather." While this specifies something about how

he views addiction, it also tells us about Jimmy's attitude toward associating with others on the streets, given the general lifestyle of street life as it centers around drugs. We then asked Jimmy about whether or not he has sought help in getting off of drugs. Jimmy sees the missions, and likely any other place where drug treatment is available, as unrelated, or maybe irrelevant, to the streets where drugs are bought, sold, traded, and used. And to go to a mission or drug agency is useless until a person is able to deal with the temptation to use drugs when he goes back out on the streets.

Q: Have you ever gone...I know some of these missions have like ahhh people you talk to help try and get off it...have you ever talked to that...

Jimmy: You still got to come back half way in the streets

Q: Really...

After a few moment's digression, Jimmy recounts an experience he had when he was overcome by the desire to use drugs because of its very presence around him.

Jimmy: And...the devil's medication is all over everywhere...when they..when they pass and you...you through with it, and there it is...sitting there...I sat down, drinking a beer with them, a associate of mine and all; I worked with them one day, and we were sitting down drinking a beer;

Q: Yeah

Jimmy: You get weak...it's a tough thing...it's a tough life....

Q: I understand.

Jimmy: Ummm...I felt like I washad a place that ummm...I was safe in and ummm...I felt better cause I was doing better and then I still was...I worked for the Labor Pool, day work...I've been doing that for the last four or five years; but ummm...I was able to make it...feel better, you know...but then, like I say, you know, ummm...you get into that drug thing, you lose your sense of responsibilities...

In the preceding part of the conversation, Jimmy links his experience to days gone by when he was "off" of drugs and working for the labor pool, working to be responsible and work his way out of his situation. As he relaxed after work with colleagues, drinking a beer, he recalls being confronted with, as he calls it, "the devil's medication," and implies that he lost his will power and sense of responsibility and "used." From Jimmy's perspective, this is what drugs do. They are everywhere and they overcome one's ability to stand alone and "not use." A person is far better off to be alone if he is to get off of drugs than to be with others who use drugs.

Q: Yeah...so you did have your own place two years ago...

Jimmy: Ohh..yes.

Q: It was an apartment...

Jimmy: No, it was a house...

Q: It was a house

Jimmy: It was a three bedroom house, and I was raising my own child by myself. He's 18...20 years old now, he's on his own. It ain't easy out there. It's not easy when you say you gone quit and leave it along and try to climb back up; cause you always got them stumbling blocks to keep you stumbling.

The conversation refers to earlier talk about Jimmy's prior life when he owned his own home in which he lived with his son. As Jimmy looks back to that prior life, he sees his efforts to stay off of drugs coupled with the continuing temptation to use them. He describes this as a stumbling block that is always present. He portrays himself as being confronted with the two difficult tasks at one time of raising a son and trying to get off of drugs. There was no one to whom he could turn for assistance, and he is confronted with being alone and assuming the formidable task of garnering the resources for both. As he describes this, his affect and intonation suggested that it was doubly difficult attempting to do both, alone.

At this point in the conversation, the interviewer turns the conversation to Jimmy's place in the city, and where he sees his place as being.

Q: **So...where do you go...what's the city...I mean, where is your place in the city?**

Jimmy: **Well, if I'm not working, I'm usually at the Salvation trying to find a place to stay. So I'm just walking all over. The day is no worst...ummm...I went in to...ummm...St Frances to eat lunch...and then I came here, lay in the park....**

As Jimmy looks back across the different times of his life, he sees himself as ever the lonely wanderer, spending his days walking, looking for a place to eat at one of the missions, and seeing the missions as his only regular locus. Then the interviewer directs the conversation toward Jimmy's source of knowledge about resources available to people who live on the streets.

Q: How'd you figure out where to go...how..who's having lunch that day or what time..

Jimmy: Well, it be..different..ummm...organizations they got...they give you a list of places to go to get food and places to wash and you know take a bath, or dress or...

Q: You just walk up there one day or did somebody tell you..

Jimmy: They had...they had to tell you...you know how that is...you know...it be different Missions, you know, like Trinity, like the Salvation Army.

Q: Yeah..

Jimmy: Good places...

We had assumed that, by asking this question, Jimmy would tell of his relationships with other homeless people and portray the talk among them as being the primary source of his knowledge of resources. He doesn't do this. Rather, he very adroitly avoids such conversation, and talks of how the agencies make lists of resources available to homeless people and he suggests that this is his primary source of knowledge. Through this mechanism, Jimmy maintains the portrayal of himself as a loner, with little or no dependence on or interaction with other homeless people. Then the conversation turns again to lifestyle, and Jimmy links the missions to his understanding of rules and law that serve to govern in both the missions and in the broader society. In invoking this particular theme, Jimmy assumes a bridge between the broader society and the missions that could include homeless people. He also displays a rationale for why the bridge cannot be crossed by many of the homeless people.

Q: So you go there--

Jimmy: If you got the proper ID and stuff and haven't been, you know, the police ain't looking for you...you're in...so...if you're gone come in there drunk or high, naturally they gone send you out if you do that.

Q: There are a lot of people..ahh..some people I've talked to who prefer outside...I mean they rather be outside than the Mission room, just because they want to sit there and drink and they got fresh air...

Jimmy: Well, they want to sit out and drink...that's the bottom line, nobody gone tell them what they can do and what they can't do. In a Mission, you got rules to follow. A lot of these people don't like to follow rules. They've lost the desire to follow rules. They got tired of following rules cause the rules that...that were made, they couldn't handle it.

Q: Have you ever felt that way yourself?

Jimmy: No, cause I was raised under rules...you know...that's...you got to have rules in order to live. Now, sometimes like I told you, you get tired...

Q: Sometimes...yeah

Jimmy: Cause it's a rule you got to pay your taxes, it's a rule..you know, they call it law...you know, it's a rule..you know.. People got tired of that...

After Jimmy returns to his conversation about homeless people, he looks to his own childhood and finds the origin of his understanding of rules. This linkage to his childhood informs his behavior vis a vis rules. He was raised under rules, and knows what they are about, including the need for them in the maintenance of social order. Other homeless people, for a variety of reasons, either do not understand rules or cannot function within their constraints. Then

Jimmy enumerates some of the rules in the broader society. By implication, Jimmy says that it is the rules of the broader society, not of their own making, that homeless people find oppressive and of which they have grown weary. The rules of the missions are likewise of others' making, and they are tired of these rules also. Then, as if to enlist us into a shared perspective, he includes us in his story by speaking of rules he feels sure we likewise grow tired of following, such as paying taxes. From this perspective, if homeless people have the option of living outside of the rules, it is understandable that they should do so.

Q: **How do you feel about people that in fact...I keep...I mean...it's eas..some people you see on the radio or some on TV say...look at these people, they're lazy...they got an easy life. There's no way in hell this life can be easy.**

Jimmy: **It ain't easy...it ain't easy because you see...you see people in your groups like those groups over there, you might think they were very good friends, but they'll cut your throat just like anybody else**

Q: **You think...**

Jimmy: **Homeless: Yeah! Just like they's a voice inside of you saying to all these other folks, jus' saying..."you bad...you bad.**

Q: **And that's why you choose to be alone...**

One of the students who participated in the interview asked Jimmy about life being easy for homeless people, thinking about comments regarding homeless people not working and seemingly lying around much of the time. Jimmy, sensing what he was referencing, however, looked to different events. As he pointed out a group of people lying on the grass and talking, he painted a

picture of a world that was visible to the public, and another that was often hidden. The people lying on the grass were not really friends, according to Jimmy, but only talking and could not be trusted because they would "cut your throat just like anybody else." Like Henry, in chapter 5, they represent threat and danger, and so wise people stay away from them out of fear and mistrust. As this is described by Jimmy, he depicts a life that is hard because of the fear, and because of the loneliness. Because of this fear and lack of trust, the world of the streets is deceptive as it is seen by those who do not live there, and Jimmy is making visible the underlying realities with which homeless people are faced.

Consistently, Jimmy links his present experience to horizons that portray the world as being one in which he can't trust other homeless people. He references these in the same context that he discusses rules. In the conversation that follows, he further elaborates his lack of trust, which then becomes another basis for wanting to live his life alone.

Jimmy: **Walk away from them [any belongs of value] and come back, you gone find it gone. Just got to hold back somewhere or it ain't gone be nothing. You don't have a friend out here, these are associates...people that you know that are in the same boat, you better not trust them.**

Q: **Do you have any friends at all...out here that you've met...**

Jimmy: **No...I prefer to be alone. You know, I'm not looking for friends, to tell the truth. The type of people I had before to be with at this time in my...my lifestyle is not up to their ...their standards, and you know, I mean, I ain't got nothing...I ain't got**

no money; I ain't got no place to stay; you know, stuff like that...you know, they don't want to be bothered. You know.

Now Jimmy becomes more specific. Contemplating his present circumstance, he actively chooses not to have friends among the homeless population. Then his vision changes to different and more distant horizons as he compares himself to friends he had at an earlier time. Linking time and space, Jimmy voices a comparison between the homeless people around him and his former friends. At one time, Jimmy had a house and money. Now, he has no house and no money, or in his words, "I ain't got nothing...I ain't got no money; I ain't got no place to stay; you know, stuff like that...you know, they don't want to be bothered. You know." In this brief bit of conversation, Jimmy also characterizes other homeless people, by inference, as having nothing: money or a place to stay. For Jimmy, money and a place to stay are a key to acceptance in the world of the domiciled. With money and a place to stay, he had connections with friends who have the same standards of behavior, the same expectations for conduct, and, in a sense, would follow the same rules as he would under more normal circumstances. Because he sees this division between the world of the domiciled and the world of the homeless, he has charted his own course of action in order to avoid any more contact with homeless people than is necessary, and to avoid contact with people who have homes and money, since they would not want to be bothered with him now in his drastically altered and inferior circumstances.

Attempting a bit of comic relief, the student continues the conversation, and then Jimmy returns immediately to topics of trusting the government or other agencies who espouse remedies for homelessness.

Q: I've noticed people here don't have money or a place to stay [chuckling].

Jimmy: Some of them live out here in the park

Q: Yeah...and that's why we're here to talk to them.

Jimmy: Um-hum...yeah...so...ahh..we're doing all we can do to stay alive from day to day

Q: You think homelessness is a problem that has an end to it...or do you think an ending side...

Jimmy: No, it don't have an end to it because ...again, with ahh...number one the drugs, and that's your biggest problem with drugs, it's the tip of the iceberg, you know, you have to get into that person's mind, you know, to see what...what caused him to do drugs in the first place. You know...once you find that out, you might be able to do something about it. Heyyy...how many people will come and sit down and spend days and months trying to straighten their minds out you know...get them on the right track. The government say they're going to do this and do that...do this and do that...talk is cheap

Q: Yeah...

Jimmy: Actions speak louder than words. You know...if they say they gone build ahh something for these homeless people, then get busy...build it...let them have a...

As Jimmy turns to talk of the homeless shelter, he makes visible his perspective on the government. The government may be responsible for building a homeless shelter, but he is not believing it until he sees it built.

"Actions," he says, "speak louder than words." His memory of the government is that it cannot be trusted. Government speaks, but it acts slowly, and not very deliberately.

Q: You want them to build it...

Jimmy: Yeah, why not...but then, if you gone build something like that, ummm...you got to train them too...give them some kind of skills. Half these people can't read.

Q: You think

Jimmy: A lot of them out here can't read...

Q: Really....

Jimmy: [Chuckles] A lot of them don't hav no more skills than sweeping floors, yard work...labor...some kind of labor work...ummm...I use to..when I was coming up in my younger days...I used to be in these government programs...six month programs...training program..just ahhh you know, something where they give you a little money, you know. More of a pre-apprenticeship type thing, you know. That's not going to be enough...Cause most of these jobs when you go to the jobs if they don't say well, okay, we'll hire you, but, you know, you got to prove yourself. What you have to do naturally, but if you don't have ENOUGH skills, the government...when they start these programs, they don't train enough to where you can go out there and start making a decent salary to keep you going. You know, the minimum wage...

Q: So you blame a lot of it on not having the proper...if the government...skilled training ..

Jimmy: Yeah..yeah..see, I've even been in a pre-apprenticeship program in Chicago. A six...seven month program in tools and dyes. Now you know, good n' doggone well tools and dye is going to take a heck of a lot more time to learn in a training program than what they gone...the little time they gone do...If the government gone help; if the government gone supply a

schooling program where you come out of there... you gone come out of there with something. Like going into the Navy...you got a four-year program...

Q: What made you...have you ever been?

Jimmy: I've been in ahhh...I serve...served in the Marine Corp for two years. I come out of there with nothing [chuckles] I mean, all I did was learn how to fight. That's all. And cuss and DRINK. That's all. [They're both chuckling]...I don't regret it, I mean, but ummm...I went in and ahhh ...I made it...Right now, I got to go and ahh ...ahhh... go see somebody about...cause I didn't ummm...lay my head until Monday. And that's way over there on 31st Street, ummm..34th Street

Q: But, umm...that person you met has said...see, see you meet some people that you trust

Jimmy: I wouldn't say trust now..I say I have no...

Q: But trust enough to...

Jimmy: Well...now...okay...

Q: But you don't...you don't really trust them, I mean you're pretty worried...you'd sleep with one eye open so to speak...

In discussing the proposed homeless shelter, Jimmy reflects on a variety of experiences with government projects, and says that building a building is not enough. From his experience with homeless people, and from his own experience, he sees that there is a fundamental problem that he does not see being resolved with the proposed shelter. In addition to a shelter, Jimmy articulates a need for programs that will also teach homeless people skills that will be helpful in their obtaining better jobs. Specifically, Jimmy looks to both his experiences with homeless people and to his own experience in the Marine

Corps. From the horizons that shape his understanding, many homeless people can't read, and they are low skilled in terms of potential. As he looks to the job market, he sees that there are jobs that are available, but to be competitive for these jobs, people will need to have more skills than most homeless people have. Since, from the vantage point of his experience, these low skilled jobs that are available to homeless people don't pay enough for them to live, there is little utility in programs for homeless people that don't adequately train them for skilled work.

But Jimmy sees a pattern at work here. He draws on two specific realms of experience with the government, neither of which was helpful to him in the job market. He reflects on his experience with a pre-apprenticeship program with the government in which he attempted to learn tool and dye trade. The program was only six months long, however, and was grossly inadequate to prepare him for his trade. Jimmy also served in the Marine Corps for two years and came out with no usable skills. All he did was to learn to cuss, drink, and fight. He continues to reflect on the government's inability to provide skills that will enable one to live above the poverty level, and instead offers inadequate substitutes.

After a brief discussion of transportation and the need for money to ride the bus, the conversation turns back to trust. Jimmy attempts to end the interview, but the interviewer turns the conversation back to Jimmy's ability to trust the person he says that he needs to go and meet.

And then Jimmy comes to the basis for a lack of trust. Resources are scarce and in the struggle for survival, gaining resources, money and otherwise, takes precedence over any possible relations. This is not something that Jimmy only thinks, however. He has had experiences, one of them recently, in which he, like Henry in Chapter 5, has been injured and robbed.

Jimmy: Ummm...naw...I hate to trust people cause everybody has got..you know, everybody has got their own way of surviving. And if its necessary, they'll knock you in the head, if you got something and they want it...they'd get you...

Q: Has it ever happened to you

Jimmy: Yeahhhh...I got a knot upside my head right now. There it is right there...

Q: What, did somebody want...

Jimmy: I say it's just because I had about \$60 - \$70 in my pocket, no...what I did was I made a mistake and I cashed my check in the store. And then somebody saw it, the next thing I know, I had about four or five young guys jump me...

Q: Yeah

Jimmy's description of his vulnerability to theft by others on the streets, homeless or otherwise, is a linkage shared by many others. I think it helpful, and fair, to note that those who are the perpetrator of these crimes are not always other homeless people. There are many who prey on homeless victims. Homeless people, without shelter, and without any place that is safe, have no place to call their own or to hide. They are open targets for those who would victimize them and take what little they have.

Having indicated that he can't trust other homeless people, or the government, and that he has no access to friends without a place of his own, Jimmy then turns to a dream of his--a place of his own that he can call home.

Jimmy: **Man, you can't be nice...so I get me a place where I can call my home; come in and I ain't got to be worried about nothing. Because man, when I close my door [chuckles], if I don't like you, ain't nobody coming in there, you know. But when you're living with somebody else, you know, you got to go by they rules. They want to come in your room, they coming in because that's they house.**

Not only does Jimmy want his own space, but he wants a place of his own, although he never said whether this would be rented or purchased. A place of his own represents autonomy and freedom from the rules of others. One of the things that Jimmy never articulates, but seems to believe, is an understanding that all relations are bounded by rules of some kind. So when he speaks of a dream of having his own place, he is speaking primarily about autonomy, and freedom from anyone else's rules. From here, Jimmy and the interviewer move to conclude the conversation, but in so doing, Jimmy further elaborates the notion that if his circumstances are to change, it is his responsibility to do what is necessary to accomplish the change.

Q: **Yeah...I...I appreciate your time and...**

Jimmy: **Alright.**

Q: **Is there ahhh one last thing you want to say or anything?**

Jimmy: **No, I just ummm...umm...um...not really...[chuckles]**

Q: **The world in the view of your eyes...**

Jimmy: Well, the world in the view of my eyes right now is viewed very negative. You can't solve...my thoughts are very negative man...but, I guess in a way, the only way I can change is for me to change.

Q: What, get a permanent job and a permanent place

Jimmy: That's what's it all about...I got to..you got to pull your ownself up, ain't nobody else gone do it...

Q: Um-hum...

Jimmy: You can sit there and wait on the government if you want to, but you know [chuckles] some people decide...

Q: Different people I talked to...I mean they've said everything. Some people think that Jesus Christ is going to magically lift them up [unclear] Is that going to happen...

Jimmy: No...I ain't seen it happen yet. I've seen a few lil things happen here and there. But, I tell you what, this is the devil's world.

Q: Out there on the streets

Jimmy: Out here on the streets...the world just belong to the devil. Now you might be strong enough to be ...Christian...study the Bible and stuff like that, and believe in God and God might be in your favor. But a lot of these people have lost their faith.

Q: And then some people put all their faith into government?

Jimmy: Yeah...they put their faith in man period. The Bible gone tell you, don't put your faith in man, put your faith in God. You see...talk to Him...But God works in his own time; the devil gone give it to you...what you want right then and there. I've had it happen.

Q: You think people ought to put their faith in themselves some...cause you said you got to change yourself.

Jimmy: Well yeah..you got to change yourself. Ain't nobody else can change you. You know, I married a woman down here. She

was on drugs, heavily on drugs. And I though maybe...I always had this dream in my life that I took this woman that ain't had nothing and provided for her. I use to stay right there in the St. Johns Hotel with my...I mean my ummm apartment...

Q: Yeah...

Jimmy: A nice apartment; married her, put her in it; didn't help cause I thought I could change by giving her something. Showing her a better life. You know, it didn't work. So nobody wasn't...so I say this, you know...you can't change me and I can't change you. I can change myself, you know. I have to want to change.

Q: If things get bad enough, you reckon people will want to change?

Jimmy: Well, you know...you...sometimes, some people get contented with the way they are. Cause they feel like they don't know how to do...they can't get any better...do any better...

Q: Right...

Jimmy: Ssss...I'm not like that.

Q: You don't think you can...

Jimmy: I know I can do better. Because I've been there, you know. I use to make \$45,000 a year driving trucks. But ummm you know...if they want a better life, they...they can pull out. It's gone be hard.

Jimmy concludes by advocating an ideological position that is consistent with the horizons of meaning around which he lives his life, that being that the only viable modus in which a person lives his or her life is self-sufficiency. Theologically, while Jimmy believes in God, this means that one cannot depend on God to work on man's time line. Only the devil does that as the devil is active in the day to day management of the world. If man is helped in the immediate

present, it is the work of the devil. Thus, from Jimmy's perspective, the way to any kind of success in gaining a better life is for one to help himself.

Jimmy's vision of the need for self sufficiency are informed by his linkage to two significant experiences. One of these experiences was a romantic relationship with a particular woman. The woman with whom he was involved was on drugs and her life was in shambles. Jimmy demonstrates his learning from this by telling how he set her up in an apartment and gave her money and, with it, stability. This didn't work for two reasons: first of all, the woman took no responsibility for herself and she did nothing to help herself. This was possible for the second reason and that is that Jimmy took responsibility for her and made all of the effort.

The second linkage that informs Jimmy's philosophy is a continuation of his memories of self sufficiency. He recalls earning \$45,000 a year driving trucks. He knows what is involved in "making it," because, as he says, "I know I can do better. Because I've been there, you know." Yet, even though Jimmy knows he could "make it," he emphasizes that it is up to him, an no one else, to "do it."

Jimmy's view of the world is negative. This grows from the lived experience to which he links his present condition. But Jimmy never says that his circumstance is the "fault" of others. He is the one who placed himself in this situation, and it is his responsibility to make changes in his circumstance. As Jimmy has linked his past life to his lived experience of life on the streets, he has

developed a well-honed philosophy, or sense of wisdom. His philosophy is expressed in his statement, "That's what's it all about...I got to..you got to pull your ownself up, ain't nobody else gone do it..." The only person to whom Jimmy attributes the power to change his circumstances is ultimately himself.

The implications of this philosophy are several. It makes no sense to depend on the government. The government may offer programs, but these programs are never realistic, or geared to the needs of homeless people. Nor should people place their faith in man. That is counter to what God says. And yet, don't expect God to make changes, as God does things in his own time. This is, after all, the devil's world, and if changes are made according to what man wants, it is the devil who is doing it. Others have placed their faith in God to change their circumstances and as a result have lost their faith as God refused to do things on their time line.

The horizons to which Jimmy links his present circumstances are such that he is left all alone. Unable to trust his fellow homeless people, cynical about what the government may do, unable any longer to relate to former friends and colleagues, unwilling to trust the Devil, and believing that God will not initiate quick fixes, Jimmy's only option is to change himself. As he concludes his story, he leaves the answer as to whether or not he can accomplish that unanswered. In the meantime, he will continue to live and work out his life—alone.

Dutch

Homeless people are a heterogeneous group who come from a variety of backgrounds. While many of them, such as Marie, are born and reared in poverty, there are some who have been reared in middle class homes and who have experienced very comfortable circumstances during their lifetime. They have only experienced poverty and life on the streets during later adolescence or adulthood. Dutch is such a person. I had known his family when I lived in another city. Members of his family had contacted me, told me that he was in a drug rehab center in Jacksonville, and asked me to check on him. When I went to visit, I found him leaving the center "Against Medical Advice" and making plans to go back to California to resume a life of drugs and surfing. After attempting to persuade him to re-enter the treatment facility, which he rejected, I asked him if I might at least interview him, letting him know that he could at least be helpful in the research process. To this, he agreed.

Approximately 3 months earlier, he had returned to the continental United States from Hawaii. While there, he had lived on the streets, or more precisely, on the beach, for most of the time. Dutch had returned to the continent in an effort to get away from the influences of what he called the druggies. He had found work doing common labor, a room in a rooming house, and started attending Narcotics Anonymous. However, within two weeks of arriving in California, his girlfriend had followed and joined him. Together, they had "gotten back into drugs," and he had found himself back on the streets. He had asked

his family for money to go to South Florida, which they had sent. When he had gone to South Florida, he had gone back to selling drugs and subsequently began using again. When the group with whom he was associated, and for whom he was selling drugs, was infiltrated by narcotics agents, he had feared arrest and began to revive his plans to return to California. He got as far as Jacksonville by hitch-hiking, and stopped here, where he went to the beach. Within a short time, he was arrested for shop-lifting. He had no prior record in Florida, and his record from Hawaii had not yet been recorded in the Florida computer system, so he was eligible for a drug rehabilitation program. Dutch remained in the program for about 10 days and decided to leave. I talked with him immediately after he checked out of the drug center and was preparing to leave the premises. The interview text begins after I had explained to him the nature of the project, and had asked him some of the introductory questions.

Q: Right now you've been in the drug rehab, but where do you usually stay?

Dutch: Various places. Usually wherever I get tired enough to sleep. Look, let's talk about when I get back to Hawaii, o.k. because that's where I'm going when I leave this town. That's why I'm going to California, to get some money together and head back for the island. O. K.? Now where I usually stay. I used to stay under this bush out close to the beach on [not clear], but someone got shot out there, so I kept moving around to not call attention to myself. Sometimes I'd stay underneath a catamaran. At the bus stops, because it's covered, that's about it.

When Dutch begins to tell of his life as a homeless person in Hawaii, the first experiences that he utilizes to construct his story are where he lived

physically. As he describes this, he depicts himself as living the life of a beach nomad, living first one place and then another, including the bush. But the bush was a place of danger, and since another person who lived in the bush had been murdered, he generally avoids this as a place to sleep. His primary concern is to call as little attention to himself as possible.

For some time, Dutch continued to weave together his story, with his experiences of living on the beach and surfing at the center. He had gone to Hawaii to surf and to spend time on the beach. He had assumed that he would find some way to earn money, but that had been relatively unimportant to him. As he continued to tell the story of his life in Hawaii, when he found himself living as a homeless person, he expressed neither surprise nor concern. This was the center of his life, and being homeless was told as being practically irrelevant.

As we turned the conversation to relationships, Dutch's story assumed some of the characteristics of more typical homeless people living on the continent.

Q: How did you, or do you stay in touch with your friends and family? I assume that you have, or would like to have some form of family or community? What does that mean to you?

Dutch: I didn't. That's the thing. I kept in contact with nobody. I ran into who ever ran into. I only knew people casually. I had no really close friends-- only those I knew that I had done drugs with. Sometimes I would talk with people in AA, but I really didn't want to see them. I was kind of embarrassed. I kind of resented them in a way. I guess I felt weird around them. Uncomfortable.

Dutch's story is told with himself at the center, and devoid of any significant relationships with anyone else. When he was asked how he kept in touch with his family and friends, he amplifies this theme by saying that he doesn't. Casual relationships with others are his primary social mode. By saying that he felt uncomfortable, or weird, around people in AA, and had closer relationships with people with whom he had done drugs, he begins to locate himself in relationship to specific communities. This pattern continues throughout the narrative.

Q: What does "home" mean to you? Do you ever wonder about having a permanent place of your own, or a place you could call your own?

Dutch: Home? That was the place where I could drink and kick back and feel comfortable without worrying about the police. I had various places like that. Like certain buildings. Under the buildings. I could do anything I wanted. Or like the harbor. The harbor was pretty much my turf. The police never hassled me in the harbor. Then in the park. That was my turf. I knew a bunch of people there. We'd talk and get high and talk a bunch of shit. They were family. I could relate to them better than I could to my blood family. Whatever was mine was theirs and whatever was theirs was mine. I never really thought about home. The bottom line is you don't have any property, so you don't have any rights to where you are. The police could tell us where we could live and not. When I was in the bush, that was my home. I felt safe there. Once that person got killed, then all my stuff got cleaned out, bed and stuff. Then I wasn't safe there either. No place was home. Home just wasn't.

When Dutch narrates his meaning of "home," this is likewise devoid of relationships. It's a physical location where he can do as he pleases without worrying about the police. Arrest by the police is his greatest fear. In drawing

from his experiences to determine what home means to him, he enumerates a variety of places where he was free from police harassment. When he mentions a particular park, this suggests a link for him to a group of people who "hung out" there and with whom he had spent considerable time. In his story, he calls them family. As he compared his linkage to this group with that of his blood family, he voices a preference for the people in the park. Implied in his statement is a pattern of exchange. They had access to whatever he owned, and vice versa. As Dutch articulates this linkage, he continues to develop his narrative around himself as "outcast," cut off from conventionally meaningful relationships.

The other way Dutch locates himself is in relationship to the police. The police represent the lack of rights that characterize homeless life because they have no property. This is a recurring theme in the narratives of many homeless people, and suggests the powerlessness of those who live outside of the structures of the domiciled world. This multi-locational placement, with the people in the park, cut off from family and friends back home, and over against authority as represented in the police, is a theme that grows with the interview.

For some time, Dutch and I talked about how he went to Hawaii, and how he became homeless once he was there. He described what life was like for him during the time he was homeless, and how he would awake in the morning only to go out and beg enough money to stay drunk all day. Then he told of his pilgrimage back to the continent to southern California, where he had again become homeless, living at first out of a VW van, and then on the streets. As

Dutch continues his story, he regularly shifts the focus of his story back and forth between his position in relationship to the police, his relationship to domiciled citizens, and his relationship with other homeless people. When the conversation turns again to Hawaii, Dutch focuses on his fear of the police, but quickly moves to his lifestyle in relationship to the rest of the world.

Q: Who did you want to be safe from?

Dutch: Safe from the police. that's the only thing. Other people. Well I'd consider that. But the way I'd look at it, nobody would want anything I had. It was the police. I always had warrants out. I didn't want to become known as a vagrant. We just wanted to be safe from the police. That's what we were afraid of-- the police. They'd put you in prison and you weren't free. If there were warrants out for me, or if they arrested me, they'd get my wallet and ID, so I'd give them a fake name. If there were no warrants out for me, I'd give my real name to them. Other people would move out of the way when I came around. People would avoid me. I was a sorry case. Sometimes, someone would walk up and give me three bucks. Or maybe someone would maybe give me ten bucks. Sometimes, when I was out in the park and other people were eating, I would watch them throw their plates away, then I'd go get it out of the garbage. People would see me do this and give me money. It was all a game. I would try to keep them off guard. If they didn't feel threatened, they'd usually give me something. It was all a game. A big con. I was a salesman. That's the way I looked at it. Sometimes I would put out a vibe, and they would give me some money just to get rid of me, but most of the time they were really compassionate. Sometimes they'd say that if you weren't drinking, maybe you'd have some money. Or, they would ask, "Do you know about the Lord?" and I'd say "The lord's taking care of me." I never felt like I was a victim. I was just real anti-authority. I didn't like the police, but the general public wasn't really so bad. The hardest thing is to put the negativism behind you. When I wasn't on crack, I was like that, but when I was on crack, I would steal, because I knew I was strung out on drugs. I'd be like Robin Hood. I'd steal all

this stuff and then go to all these people and sell it to them really cheap. Meat. Seafood. I had clientele that knew me. They knew what I was doing. They just didn't want the liquor commission looking at them. I sold them meat that I'd stolen. That was my big thing. I felt like I was in the driver's seat. I'd steal the meat from the grocery store. I'd walk in, load up and be out in less than ten minutes. I'd do this as many as three or four times a day in the same store. You can make a lot of friends when you've got stuff like that. "I've got the meat. Feel it. It's fresh off the rack." Then I got arrested doing that. I went into a store one Christmas eve and stole some fish and a turkey and a bottle of whiskey. I got greedy, went into another store and tried for two more, got caught and was arrested--in a blackout. It was a big ego trip that I could supply some stuff--add something to the party. The whole time I was stealing it, I knew what was going on. I had no self esteem. I wasn't doing the right thing. I was living a bad life. As long as I was drunk I could tolerate it. I could relate to other street people, but not really. I felt differently. I knew I was there because of my drug and alcohol problem. I had no place of own, but they were all places of my own. I'd go to wealthy neighborhoods or poor. I had a problem with white collar conservatives. I felt like we should be able to squat land wherever it was if it wasn't being used for anything else, and of course they didn't. I felt sorry for them. They were like in prison, having to live in their houses and go to work every day, and I could just roam free. If you cleaned me up and sat me down next to the person, you couldn't tell the difference. I knew, realized, because I had grown up in money and society. The guy who turned me on to the bush had owned three bars in the Philippines near Clark Air force base, but when he got there he was homeless. He was a victim. If you talked to him, he was sharp. It's not fair to judge someone because of their appearance. It's the same with the wealthy. You say they're wealthy if they have nice clothes and a nice car. The way I look at it now, I was sick person, but the way I looked then was the way I felt then. My clothes were turning black--the way they get when you don't wash them. My skin was dark. I stunk. I was in the sun all day. I'd get that weathered' look. At least I did. I couldn't surf because of my ear. If I had been surfing, it would have been a different ball game. I was just depressed, I guess. Most of the time, the way I look at it now,

I was depressed. But if you'd asked me then, I'd have said you were crazy, or something. Nothing was wrong with me. I just didn't have a plan yet. Now the guy from Philippines had a plan. Others might be different. If they were assholes, I wouldn't mess with them. They had so much anger, you couldn't be around them. There's a lot of cool people, but you never know. I didn't really think when I was doing this. I just did what I had to do. If I was hungry, I'd be going to get something to eat. I'd go behind restaurants and say *kaukau*. That means [unclear] They'd hand me something. Then I'd go back and stand quietly. The next time I'd go back, I'd always act retarded. Like I was in a daze. I'd screw with people. Act real timid. Put on the humility trip. I knew what I was doing because I was getting what I wanted, whether it be a quarter or a plate of food. I ate amazingly well. Homeless people cruise around and eat two lunches, and if you hit all the people in town, you wind up with more than you can carry. Besides that, I usually wouldn't eat, but I'd drink. Food was never a problem. If worse came to worse, I'd hit the hookers up. I'd say give me a buck, and they'd say, "Sure baby, here's a buck." Maybe couple of bucks. I was calculating about who I approached for what and how I'd approach them.

With regularity, Dutch returns again to his fear of the police. This is one of the prime themes of his story of his sojourn in Hawaii. He, and other homeless people, such as Trine, live in constant fear of their harassment and arrest. He would have nothing that others would want, and they would know that by the way he looked. But the police were a different story. Dutch was wise in the ways of the streets, and knew that when there was a warrant out for his arrest, or when he was aware of law-breaking behavior, he would give a fictitious name, knowing that if he gave his real name or surrendered his ID, he would lose both his freedom and identity.

As Dutch shifts his gaze to other people, he recognizes that he was an outcast as far as they were concerned, and he approached them accordingly. He depicts his life as one of begging, of conning, of threat and intimidation. For him, life was a game. At times, he would act as though he were insane, at other times he would eat out of garbage cans in their presence, and at times he would act "humble," presenting himself as an object of pity. Whatever he did, however, he portrays himself in the interview as never feeling like a victim, as he was getting what he wanted.

After Dutch had described more of his homeless lifestyle, as it revolved around drinking and drugging, I asked him how he felt about himself in this complex web of relationships.

Q: What'd you think about yourself? How'd you feel about your life?

Dutch: I felt like good person. Deep down inside. Maybe an example. That was my lot in life to be an example. I had some intelligence, but I was afraid that I was losing my mind. I never thought about example to who. To God's children, I guess. Just to people. God's children. But then there were phases where I was wild. I'd get drunk all the time. Sometimes it would be just a wild trip. Then I'd get on to acid and go around trying to be kind to people and help people, tourists, etc. I was dirty, but I'd still try to help them out. If you befriended them, then the next thing you know you're in the corner pub. and I drove a taxi while I was on the streets. Early on, I slept in the cab, but later on I couldn't. I'd have to give the car up and I'd still be zinging. About ten o'clock, I'd score my last rock. Then I'd drink a few beers then turn the keys in. Then whatever cash I had I'd keep. I'd already paid for the cab, so it was all part of the deal. Then I'd get drunk and steal some stuff and go down and sell it. Then I'd go down and get some more rock on my own. I was on a totally different clock.

It was totally chaotic. up twenty four hours a day and whenever I'd burn out that's when I would crash. And then that's when I'd get really psychotic. Then I would start holding people up for their money. That's bank robber material. If I could have pulled it off, that what I would have done. Rock--I was getting into the rock hard, but I had been kind of freaking out on the rock and a guy gave me some acid. I met some people that wanted to trip out, and these people wanted to pull me in. Like, "We can use you." They saw something in me that wasn't a total idiot. Plus I liked to smoke rock, so I earned my keep. That was an on and off relationship. Then for a while I'd have a place to stay, then I wouldn't-- when they'd burn out on me. Going from world to world. That's what it was like. Shifting worlds. Letting myself get that way. It was like I was a different person whenever I was on the streets or with somebody, but basically the same. I almost hoped I'd wind up in the jail. Get caught and then wouldn't have to live the rat race. Not afraid to get caught at that stage, then wouldn't have to do this.

As Dutch looks to his experience of himself, he begins by linking self to his assessment that "deep down inside" he is a good person. But more than that, he expresses a vocational attitude toward his life. The story he tells about who he sees himself as being is almost mystical. It is as though he were destined to live out his life as an example to God's children. Then the story takes a predictable turn as Dutch connects to the opposing experience of self that he describes as a wild phase. In this phase, his is the quintessential embodiment of good and evil. This side, or phase, is chaotic as he goes without sleep, sleeps in cabs, and stays either high or drunk all of the time. His relationships are likewise chaotic. Tripping on acid, he befriends tourists and others on the one hand. But this wild phase had its down side. He became, not the mystical example, or even the local druggie or drunk, nor even Robin Hood,

but the thief who held people up for their money. While in this phase, he recalls being "pulled in" by some people, who gave him a place to stay when he was dealing for them. Interestingly, Dutch interprets this as their recognizing value in him. After a while, however, he describes this lifestyle as having taken its toll on him as the constant shift in his relationships took their toll. His stays with these people weren't permanent, and he continues to shift back and forth between these people and different communities of association and styles of living. Some of his experiences fall within the domain of a self-diagnosed psychosis.

Dutch's final analysis is that he "was going from world to world. That's what it was like. Shifting worlds. Letting myself get that way. It was like I was a different person whenever I was on the streets or with somebody—but basically the same." He depicts the chaos and desperation of his situation most vividly when he says "I almost hoped I'd wind up in the jail. Get caught and then wouldn't have to live the rat race."

CHAPTER 7 YOU DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO

In the interview texts of the preceding chapters, it can be seen within the narratives themselves that the temporal and spatial dimensions of life on the streets intersect within events and cannot be separated from each other. Further, they are interrelated and reflexive with the events that mark their intersections. As with all social life, the temporal and spatial dimensions are both resources used in the construction of the social world of the homeless and, reflexively, products of its construction. The lives of homeless people, like those of the domiciled, are lived at sequenced spatio-temporal intersections, and they link the narratives of their lives to the experiential realities of the events that form these intersections as they draw from them meanings that are shaped by these linkages.

But the homeless, as they tell the stories of their lives, also look to the occurrences and events that mark the spatio-temporal intersections of the domiciled world. Although they articulate it in different ways, and according to biographically specific linkages, the respondents whom I have interviewed see this connectedness and reference it in terms of a variety of structures and institutions within the domiciled world. This is particularly telling in that they see

it precisely because they are *not* a part of it. As they tell the stories of their lives, they reference the domiciled world, as it were, "from the outside looking in." Although their narratives provide biographically specific understandings of the domiciled world, taken together they constitute a shared perspective constructed around the theme of being outsiders in relationship to that world. As they look to the structured world, they see that they are not only outsiders but are excluded from the structures and institutional resources of the domiciled world. The experiential realities to which they link their lives are disconnected from conventional linkages to relationships and institutional life within the domiciled world.

All of this marks a significant difference between the world of the homeless and the structured world of the domiciled as understood by these homeless respondents. It is precisely the regularity of occurrence of events made possible by the perceived consistency of the spatio-temporal dimensions of their lives that makes structured institutional life possible for the domiciled. That regularity is missing in the lives of homeless people, resulting in a lack of resources and relationships that, if present, would make possible an organized and, consequently, more predictable life.

With this understanding of the interrelationship between time and space, from the perspective of homeless people, institutions, situated in conventional time and space, are difficult, if not impossible, for them to access. Here, I reference specifically the institutions of work, family, education, and government.

With this inaccessibility comes a second break in the relationship of homeless people with the structured domiciled world. That is a break from the conventional moral order that is sustained by these institutional arrangements. From the point of view of the homeless, the conventional moral order serves the interests of those who are participants in the structures and institutions. To homeless people, living outside of these institutional arrangements, the conventional moral order is irrelevant as they are cut off from participation in the institutions and thus the structures of the domiciled world. They thus suspend the conventional moral order of the domiciled and institutionally arranged world. In its place they construct a moral order according to their own relevancies, and within their own intersections of time and space.

This has already been partially observed in the in the linkages Henry forms in my interview with him in Chapter 5. Without referring specifically to time and space, Henry refers to the domiciled as having "a club," and the sense of his story is that homeless people were excluded from participation in that club. The events to which Henry refers include space and time as components of a world that is structured. He saw that people with the commonality of being housed lived at common intersections of time (simultaneity) and space (being in proximity because of the commonality of having place) and are seen to interact with each other on a recurring basis. These regular occurring interactions are seen as structures. The structures include the resources of the law as protector and a moral order, or a code of right and wrong behavior. These same

resources are not available to the homeless, and therefore become irrelevant and suspendable. Therefore, they develop alternative resources, including the law of the streets, which is only partially effective, and vigilance against other homeless people. Trine shares this same perception, as do many of the homeless, but he sees the structured world from an even more extreme position. He sees the structured world being over against the homeless and the resources of this structured world as the sole possession of the domiciled. The law, as embodied in the police and the courts are, from his perspective, resources and instruments of the structured world in managing the homeless and keeping them distant from the structured world.

As homeless respondents tell their stories in this chapter, the common theme around which linkages are drawn is that the conventional moral order is suspended in favor of another moral order that serves the interests of homeless people. That moral order is one of expediency, although it is considered to be, and is frequently labeled, deviance by members of the conventional domiciled world (Becker, 1963). One of the common phrases that expresses the theme of outsider and encompasses the moral order of those who live on "the outside" is "you do what you gotta do." This is a recurrent theme in the narrative interviews of the respondents and organizes much of their life on the streets.

Sadie

The moral order of the homeless world is, in addition to its other qualities, gendered. When men speak of doing what they have to do, they speak primarily of stealing, eating out of trash cans, or discovering means of "conning" others in order to get food or other resources from them. There are, of course, men like Billy Bob, whose narrative is incorporated into this chapter, who speak of male prostitution, but this is not the norm. I observed this only rarely. The women with whom I spoke, however, are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and this exploitation occurred almost universally in the interview texts of homeless women. When they speak of doing what they have to do, they frequently speak in terms of granting sexual favors or performing a variety of sexual acts. However, among my female respondents, this is almost always doing what they have to do in order to obtain drugs.

Sadie is painfully aware of what a woman has to do in order to survive in the drug world. Her horizons are effectively limited to one dimension. Once a woman has made the shift to drugs and to the norms of the drug world, she is left to the only resources that she has at her disposal, the primary resource being sex. I talked with Sadie about life on the streets for a woman. She speaks candidly of this life, both from her own experience and from the shared experience she has in common with others.

In the early part of the following excerpt from my conversation with her, Sadie speaks of the plight of women who are regarded as either physically

unattractive, or too old to be attractive, to drug dealers and others who can furnish drugs. The scenario she depicts is vivid and frightening. It depicts a life of women exploiting women, men exploiting women, and all done in a series of degrading sexual activities.

Sadie: ...I don't, didn't ever have to do this, but if I WAS ugly, I'd take a pretty young somebody down with me, and we'd jus get to talkin' and shootin' the shit, an' I'd say, "scuse me, but I gotta go to the bathroom", an' I'd leave an' I wouldn't come back, and then she'd be stuck right there, and she'd do whatever they made her do.

Q: Even if she didn't want any drugs?

Sadie: Oh, she'd want drugs all right. She wouldn't have got herself into this if she didn't want drugs. Everybody knows where the drugs is at. An' after I left, I'd go out and get me a rock, and then I'd leave, and she'd leave whenever she could, if she wanted to, or she might just stay and hang out.

Q: She wouldn't call the police?

Sadie: You kiddin'. She don't want to get busted for drugs. She ain't goin' to call nobody. Sides—she really don't care nowadays. I mean what's to care? Won't do you no good. So you jus' hang and you do what you got to do.

After talking about these other woes, and how bad it gets most of the time, Sadie's linkage shifts to even more bizarre events. The example she cites is one that is guided only by the moral order of "you do what you got to do," suspending any kind of conventional moral order. She turns the conversation to talk about "sometimes, it gets really bad," and she relates the story of "this chick, and she wanted some crack."

Sadie: But sometimes it gets really bad! Sometimes, when you get straight, an' you think about what you did, like this girl, and she was a pretty girl, well, she...

Q: [unclear]

Sadie: Anyhow, there was this chick, an' she wanted some crack, an' she went down where they was partyin' an... she goes down there and they's about five men sittin in this room, and they say, "if you want some crack, you gotta take off your clothes." So she take off her clothes and then they bring this dog in and they make her go down on this dog while they watch. Now that's what crack'll make you do. If you get to jonesin', you'll do anything for a rock. An' I mean anything! So that's what I mean when I say "You just do what you gotta do."

As Sadie links the theme of "you do what you gotta do" to the priorities of the drug world as seen in the imagined woman whom she references, she shows that the woman does two things: first, she goes to a place where she knew crack would be available, "down to the place where they were partyin'," and second, while there, she has to pay the price of sexual interaction with a dog before a group of five men in return for crack cocaine. While this would no doubt be seen by many, if not most, as a sad and degrading act, Sadie tells the story to illustrate an entirely different set of priorities that guide the behaviors of drug involved homeless women. Yet it is not materially different from the experiences of other women whose stories we heard. It is only different in the degree to which the young woman is willing to suffer humiliation in order to obtain drugs. In the face of the heightened priorities accorded to drugs, women on the streets and on drugs understand the value of their bodies as barter. But this is not limited to women on drugs. Marie used her body for barter with Bo,

and with her mother's boyfriends, but hers was more as barter for companionship and small amounts of money. The exchange of sexual activity was also seen as normal and even taken-for-granted within her world. However, the desire for drugs assumes a higher priority than food, money or dignity, and thus increases the willingness of women to trade access to their bodies and sexual favors for drugs.

In this conversation, it is interesting to note the emphasis that is placed on "kinky sex" in Sadie's story. Practically every other homeless woman with whom I spoke wove together different biographical linkages into the same theme. However, there is practically no mention of these themes regarding women and sex in interviews with men on the streets. This seems to be significant if only by the absence of any mention. There is one exception to this, and the reader will hear this exception in the interview with a man I have named "Billy Bob." He reveals this theme, however, only when prompted by my questions, and that is not in the form of experiential linkages, but as speculation in an attempt to provide an explanation for the behavior.

I discussed the absence of this theme with members of the research team and their general response is summed up in Robert's statement:

Hell, even if those guys done that stuff, they ain't going to talk to you in the first place. They ain't the type to talk to nobody. And even if they did, you think they going to admit to that shit? Hell no! And besides that, most of them ain't homeless anyways. They jus' men that crosses over to the streets to get some weird stray, and they got money and drugs to get it. There's lots of men that hang out with homeless chicks cause

they know that's easy stuff. The homeless, they tryin' to GET drugs and booze, not give 'em away. And most of 'em wouldn't know what to do with a chick if they had one. You forget, John, these people are mostly crazy or drunk. Bout all they can do is figure out where to sleep and where to get somethin' to eat and get some clothes and smokes and some beer. They not really tryin' to get no nookie.

This assessment of the sexual appetites of men on the streets corresponds with my own observations and further emphasizes the place survival occupies in the priorities of homeless people in general. In particular, the men I have met have either never been married, or they have been married, or in significant relationships, and have left the marriages or other relationships and seem not to be anxious to begin new ones. While these men "do what you gotta do," that does not include the luxury or freedom to pursue sexual activity.

Connie

I interviewed Connie at the a public center for the homeless in February, 1997 during the annual homeless count. Connie is in his late forties, a white male who is clean cut and very slight. He is highly articulate and relates to experiences that picture himself as being intelligent and perceptive, and because of this, considers himself to be different from the other homeless people, although he shares their same social location, but on a temporary basis. When I first began the interview with Connie, he would not agree to having the interview tape recorded. After we had talked for a while, I mentioned that I regretted very much our not recording the interview. At that point, he agreed for

me to tape the interview, and we made the effort to start over. While the substance remains the same, and even much of the wording, the following interview is somewhat abbreviated and much shorter. However, Connie covers the range and the sequence of what we had originally discussed.

The first questions I asked of him had to do with his living conditions, and how he liked living in the shelter. Soon, the conversation turned to how long he had lived like this, and what brought him to this lifestyle.

Q: So, how long you been living like this?

Connie: Long time. Off and on for about ten or eleven years.

Q: Homeless for ten or eleven years off and on?

Connie: Yep. Its got to be a way of life for me.

Q: When you think about the city of Jacksonville, how do see yourself fitting into it?

Connie: How do you mean? Like am I a part of what's going on?

Q: Yeah. That's what I mean, but more to the point, where do you fit into groups in the city? Family? Work? Citizen? Where all do you fit in?

Connie: I don't fit into none of those. If you want to know the truth, I don't fit into this town at all.

Q: Can you tell me why?

Connie: Cause I'm a ex-con, and I'm homeless. That's why. I don't mean to sound short to you. Hell, you're talking to me about it. But I am kinda bitter.

After Connie comments on his feelings of alienation, and then of his feelings of bitterness and alienation from the City of Jacksonville, because of his

being an ex-convict and being homeless, the conversation progresses to retrace his conviction and his consequent criminal career. As Connie moves through the narrative, he does not plead innocence, but he does tell the story in such a way as to say that he was not the primary instigator of the embezzlement for which he was convicted. In the portion of the interview text that follows, Connie tells of his academic preparation and subsequent involvement with the company for which he worked, and of his subsequent arrest and incarceration.

Q: I can understand that. You're an ex-con. What can you tell me about that?

Connie: Three times. Three times, I've been in prison. One year and three months, two and a half years, just about, and one year and seven months and twenty-two days. Just got out of that one, it'll be six weeks Saturday. Now you want to know what for, right?

Q: If you want to tell me.

Connie: In 1968, I went to work for [WYZ construction] company. You know that name, I'm sure.

Q: Yes. That's a big company.

Connie: Well, I went to work in the office keeping the books. Back then, it wasn't as big as it is now, and I started out as the assistant bookkeeper. I'd been to the Business College and studied accounting. Well, after I had been there about three years, or three and a half years, maybe, the senior bookkeeper quit to take another job, and I had to fill in. And I did a good job. So good that they made me the head bookkeeper. Then, after I had been in that job for about four years, I started noticing some discrepancies in the receipts. So I told Mr. Brown about it, he was the vice president that I worked for, and he was the son-in-law of Mr. X, the owner, and he said not to worry because sometimes in the construction business,

with a lot of cash payments and all, things get a little off, but it wasn't any problem, so just make it fit. And I did. I kept the books balanced, and kept it all looking good. We got audited every year by one of the big eight firms, and they didn't notice a thing wrong. Then I got a raise. I mean a hell of a raise. Well, the amounts got bigger and bigger, and I kept covering it up, making it look good. Then, I started noticing something. I noticed that some of the big receipts all started having the same looking signature, and they came from different places, and then I knew that something funny was going on. So I started noticing the other signatures a little more closely, and who do you think was doing the big receipts. Mr. Brown! The next time we got audited, then, they sent back the report showing that there was some trouble. Now I don't have much education, but I knew that what we were talking about was embezzlement. So, I went back to Mr. Brown and asked him if he knew anything about this that he wasn't telling me, and he said, of course not, that nothing was wrong, and that it would all get cleared up. The next thing I knew I was called into Mr. X's office and told that I was being terminated because of discrepancies in the books. I told him that I could explain everything, but he said that he didn't want to hear it and for me to get out. Then about 8:00 that evening, my doorbell rang, and it was the police with a warrant for my arrest. And it was downhill from there. In court, Mr. Brown said that he would have never suspected me of embezzling funds, and that he had assumed that these were honest mistakes and that I had just been doing a good job keeping things looking good. But when the accounting firm had gone to the owner, Mr. X, and pointed out the obvious embezzlement to him, to the tune of \$121,000, he was forced "to admit" that I may have been taking the money. He lied. They all lied. That asshole Brown stole that fucking money, and I know it. And he knows it! But he was a part of the club, and I was set up. Then the club had a high priced law firm. And me, all I had was a public defender who wasn't worth a fuck, like any public defender, and they got away with it and I got sent up. For six years, I got sent up. But after a year and three months, with the jails being over crowded and all, and with this being my "first offense," they let me out. But where's an ex-con going to get a job. He ain't. He just flat out ain't. So, I started dealing drugs. Then I got busted for illegal possession and sent up again, and this time,

I got out after two and a half years. Then, and this is just in a nutshell, I got sent up for being a conspirator to a burglary because I didn't rat on one of my buddies. Now I'm trying to get a job on construction while I'm living down here. They're supposed to call me tomorrow. If I can get that, then I'll be able to get a place to live, and maybe I can start all over.

As Connie links his present situation to his experience of work and the events that led to his arrest, conviction and incarceration, he links the difficulties he has encountered to his understanding of those within the power structure of both the company and of the community as well. They had banded together to "protect their own group," of which he was not a member. Connie's portrayal of the structures of the business and industrial world resemble Henry's "club," although they are somewhat narrower in scope.

Connie's story argues that he has been framed. He doesn't see this as persecution, which might be considered a form of paranoia, but as the group protecting its own. This results in a particular kind of exclusion that is based not on race, or even primarily social class, but on who is and who is not a member of the in-group. He does not specify his reasons here, but later suggests that it is the elite group. For Connie, this results in a population that is divided, with the one group dominating the other group. This domination, however, is unrecognized by the community, but it has significantly negative consequences for those who are not a part of the in group and who suffer overtly at the hands of the elite.

Our conversation then turned to Connie's sense of participation in the community and what his life has been like as a result of his conviction.

Q: It's been rough.

Connie: Damned straight!

Q: So, let me ask you again. How do you relate to the city of Jacksonville?

Connie: It's like this. Before all this happened, I thought of myself as a good citizen. I felt like I really had a place here. I liked the town. I liked the people. I liked my work. But now, uh uh! No way. This fucking place is my enemy. The whole fucking town. They can take their justice system and stick it up their snobby assholes. The town is one big country club as far as I'm concerned. If you're a part of it, you can be as crooked as you want, and get away with it. If you're not part of it, the law's got nothing to do with you except to convict you. Wreck your fucking life! No, sir! You bet your sweet ass I'm not part of it. I don't want any part of this goddamned town.

Connie broadens his gaze to include the vista of the entire community and begins to include the town as a club. He, like Henry and Trine, links his understanding to a kind of social cohesion that ties together groups of proximal social locations that exist simultaneously. The bond between its members is tight and loyal, to the detriment of those outside. Before his original conviction, Connie sees himself as a legitimate member of the community. He had prepared himself educationally, and through loyal and hard work, and he liked being a part of the city. However, as he reflects on his experiences with the embezzlement, Connie has felt sufficiently alienated from the entire city to now see himself in the position of its enemy as he places his social location over

against the city. His conviction, however, results not so much in a change in his basic social location as a change in his perception of it. Through this experience, Connie has become aware, as it were, of the social location he had occupied all along vis a vis the city. As he understands his post-conviction location, he sees that he was no more than a disposable commodity, available to be used at the convenience of the power elite.

From this vantage point, Connie believes that the law has nothing to do with justice, but with the protection of the privileged group within the city. Now, being ostracized by both his convictions and his situation of homelessness, he sees himself as being the target of the justice system, rather than being protected by it. As the interview continues, Connie locates himself in time and space over against the group of which he originally saw himself a part.

Q: What do you do about the law now? The whole justice system?

Connie: Nothing. Not a goddamned thing. I'm my own fucking law. I just try to stay out of those bastard's way. And they'd better stay out of mine. I apologize. It don't help for me to get so upset and worked up, and I don't mean to get so upset. You know?

Q: What happens if you don't get this job?

Connie: Don't know.

Q: Would you ever deal drugs again?

Connie: Don't know.

Q: I can understand that you might feel bitter, but one of the things I'm trying to understand is, well actually two things.

One is how homeless people relate to the overall moral order of the community, and whether or not they have their own moral order.

Connie: I can relate to the moral order. That's mostly the same as mine. But the justice system, as you call it, is not moral. But that's not what you're asking. See, out here, people come from all over. And most of them start off with the same morals as people in the rest of society. Now they don't express it as well, and they may be a little rough, but there's not really much difference in their moral order and anybody else's. Maybe in some things there is, but mostly it's the same. But what happens is this. Most of us out here have been shit on really bad. And most of us remember that. And we get to where we don't trust anybody. See, the rest of society is all organized to help just a few—not the masses, but just a few. And the moral order you talk about is set up to help those same few. So, when people are really shit on, they don't give a shit about most of the rest of the people, especially the few. So they lose interest in the moral order, including the law. I guess you include that as part of the moral order. They sure lose interest in manners and things like that. And they get interested in what's in their interest. And that's survival. And they forget about the moral order when it comes to their survival. Now that's not too different either from the other people. They only really follow the moral order when they're afraid they'll get caught and when it's in their interest. Well, the way it is, most of them are scared of getting caught most of the time. Now when they step outside of their society, they don't have to worry about getting caught, so they don't follow the moral order. But when they are in it, like at work, or with their friends, or at home, or wherever, they have to follow it. And since they have to follow it so much, it gets to be like a habit, and they really think they follow it, but they don't. And sometimes, and I've heard too much about this, in fact I've seen it, good upstanding, self-respecting men will drive their fine cars down here to the ghetto and get a blow job from a hooker. Or they might get high at some crack house, or they might do just about anything. But if they're in their world, with their houses, their jobs, their respectability, and all that, they ain't about to bust up the moral order. So, sometimes they escape that world and come over this world, or to the ghetto

where there ain't those restrictions. But on the other hand, they don't go round where word might get back to their world. They're kind of careful, so they don't get caught too much. And nobody over in the ghetto, or on the streets is going to rat on them for two reasons. First, they don't have any respect for the moral order, as you call it, since they see it's not in their interest. And second, these cats pay good. But now, people on the streets are pissed at the world and its moral order, so they have gotten tired of it--more than most anybody else. And they keep goin' and goin', and after awhile, they cross a line, and then that's the way they get to be most all the time. And since they don't have to go in and out of that world, since they just have to play a little game at a mission or shelter for a little while to get a meal or some clothes or a night out of the cold or rain or whatever, and since that's bout the closest they get to this other world, the moral order don't stick for them.

During this part of the conversation, Connie becomes teacher, or self-conscious interpreter, of life on the streets. In the present time, being outside of the community, Connie is outside of its moral order, including the law. Connie has become his own law. This occurs because of his alienation from the business and civic community in general. When the social order is no longer relevant to him, neither is its law. And when the community becomes his enemy, so, to, is the law. The law is intimately tied to the social order of the community and is irrelevant to anyone else.

Connie is not without knowledge of the conventional moral order, and he relates to its tenets. He identifies it with morals and maintains that most people start out with the same morals. The moral order is, in this sense, inclusive, but becomes the property of the elite group. Because of the harm done to those outside by the elite group, the moral order is also irrelevant and subsequently

forgotten by those outside of the elite group as their primary concern becomes, out of necessity, survival. Although differing in the biographical specifics, this is yet another way of constructing the shared biographical linkage of the suspension of the moral order when one is outside of the structures of conventional social life. Besides this, most homeless people have actively been victimized by the elite group through the agency of their law and feel antagonistic, not only to the groups and structures, but to "their law" as well.

Connie then draws on his understanding of the morality of people in general. He perceives that one is in danger of being caught, or ostracized, by the moral order, or the law, only when he or she is within its domain. He theorizes that when people are outside of that domain, "the law" leaves them alone. This leads people who appear to be moral within the socio-spatial arrangement of the community at times to escape. When escaping from the group, or the socio-spatial arrangement of the community, one also escapes their laws. Therefore, to escape the moral order, or the law, one has to but change social locations, leaving the moral order behind as they leave the social arrangements behind, thus freeing them to do as they please outside of the bounds of morality. Connie understands that residents of the domiciled world do this with little risk, as the domiciled world and the homeless world have little in common, and because it is not in the interest of homeless people to reveal these indiscretions.

Homeless people are permanently outside the structures of morality and law. Connie sees them as having begun their lives within the law, but were increasingly distanced from it through the actions of the elite group, which, in the course of things, also made life for them miserable. They have come to be permanently outside of the social order and the law because they have crossed an imaginary line where they could recognize their own domain or world. They continue to have dealings with the structured world through the missions and the shelters, but only marginally in order to secure clothing, shelter, or food. And the cost is minimal--only playing a little game of religion for a short while, which he sees most of the homeless people as doing. And it is a small price to pay.

Then the conversation turns to Connie's reference to two different worlds, or, as Connie rephrases it, of three different worlds.

Q: You describe two different worlds.

Connie: Yeah, actually three. Least around here. There's the white world, the black world, and the homeless world, which has bout every color you can think of in it. Now the white world, you know what their moral order is. But the black world, mostly that in the ghetto, they got their own moral order. The white world can't see that, but it's there. And they have their own moral order just to survive in their own world. Then there's the homeless world, the world of the streets.

Q: Do they have any moral order of their own?

Connie: Moral order. Naw, not really. They do whatever they have to do to survive. And that's the only thing that's important to them.

Q: Do what you gotta do, is that it?

Connie: That's it.

Q: Is that your moral order?

Connie: Yeah, if you want to call it that. I might as well admit to it. That's why I got busted twice, after I saw what happened to me when I tried to follow the rules. Like now, my number one goal is survival. Now if I get that job, maybe I'll follow the rules again. But if I don't, I'll do whatever I have to do to survive. I'll tell you this much. I ain't eatin' out of no garbage cans. An I ain't pissing in any park where people can drive by and look at me and laugh. And I ain't stayin' in any goddamned mission. In fact, I'm bout tired of this place. Nope. I'm goin to live with my dignity according to my own law.

Q: How about a law of the streets? Is there a law of the streets?

Connie: Yeah, in a way, but in a way not.

Q: How so?

Connie: People on the streets talk about it, but they never say what it is, and if you asked them, they probably couldn't tell you. I know I couldn't say what it is.

Connie relates the three worlds, those of the white population, the black population, and the homeless population, to the moral order. The white world he has sufficiently addressed in terms of its moral order. He sees the black world as having a different moral order, however, but no less a defined morality. It too has suffered at the hands of the elite white world. This moral order of the black world appears to the white world as having no moral order, but that is because of their own preoccupation with their privileged status. At first, Connie sees that the homeless world has no moral order, but then, at my suggestion sees that in fact it does, and that is "they do whatever they have to do to survive," which I

rephrased as "do what you gotta do." While there may be a question in Connie's mind as to whether or not this is a moral order, there is no misunderstanding that, from his perspective, the conventional moral order has been suspended in the homeless world and has been displaced by the need for survival. This is made more difficult because of the actions of the structured world toward them.

But Connie wants to go beyond that. Survival is not enough. He will not live off of the "crumbs" of the elite. What he wants most is his own dignity, according to his own law. He has been deprived of this dignity by the elite protecting their own and their world from people who are not a part of it.

The conversation continues as Connie talks of three different worlds, clearly delineating them from each other.

Q: A few minutes ago, you spoke of a white world, a black world, and the homeless world. What did you mean by that particular division?

Connie Well, there is three different worlds. Back fore I went to prison, I wouldn't have said so, but I can see it now. Or maybe I would have said it, but I'd of meant it differently. See, I used not understand what the blacks' gripe was, but now I do. The white world, the white power structure, they're goin' t' do things their way. Now the white world has black people in it, and other people too, but it's white, and its goin' t' stay white. Now this ain't just a matter of color. It's a matter of who runs the show. And sometimes they'll let a black man help to run the show, you know, become a manager or something like that, but that's mostly for show. The only places black people are allowed to make it big is in professional athletics. Or in show business, which is bout the same thing. And those things are like the old time minstrel shows, or something like that. So, the black people have their own world cause they can't be part of the white world. Now me, I understand the black people. Cause I'm like they are. I might even be called a

white nigger, cause I'm shut out just like the black people are. And for something that wasn't even my fault. And I get along with em real well. We don't get to be asshole buddies, or anything like that, but I respect them and they respect me. Being in prison with em has given me something in common. I mean, you find a lot of white people and black people that get along after they been in prison together. Now they got something in common. Now don't get me wrong. I don't like their music, and they don't like mine. I don't like their talkin, and they probably don't like the way I talk. And I don't like the way they live in general, and they probably don't like the way I live, but we respect each other, and that's because we got bitterness in common. And that's what you see out on the streets. I mean you probably won't see a lot of blacks and whites bein' asshole buddies. In fact, you won't see a lot of people in general bein' asshole buddies. And blacks usually run with blacks and whites with whites, but that's just the way it is. Most of em don't hate each other, though, and you don't see many fights between em. They just stay to their own kind, like down here, or in Confederate Park, or wherever they hang out, and each group respects the other enough to leave em alone, and they get along fine.

Q: How is life on the streets compared with life in prison?

Connie: Not too different. Both places you shut off from the rest of the world. Both places, people in society look down on you. Both places, you gotta follow too many rules somebody else set. Both places, you're suspected, tried, and convicted just because of who you are, or maybe I should say, since nobody gives a shit about who you are, "where you are."

I was surprised that in all of these interviews there is little mention of race or race relations. At those times when I made this the topic of concern, there was typically a response of practical disinterest. One of the members of the research team, reflecting the sentiments of one of my respondents, had framed

race relations in terms of his experience with Alcoholics Anonymous when he said

We're all in the same boat. We may have gotten here by many different routes, but we're all in the same boat now. And when we're in this boat, how we goin' to judge each other. We need to help each other make it. And you can't do that by judgin' the color or a man's skin. That really don't make no difference when you're in this boat.

Connie, in much the same way, says that there are three different worlds-- the white world, the black world, and the homeless world, which is comprised of both black and white. The white world is where power resides. The power structure controls this world and exists because of its position of primacy and privilege. Members of the black world are occasionally allowed into this world, sometimes even in positions of prominence, but it remains in essence a white world. The black world exists because of the common exclusion of its members from the white world. Connie sees this world as bound together by a common culture and common oppression, and existing as a separate world from the white world. The third world is one that originates in prison, or other social places of oppression, and includes both black and white people. Connie characterizes this world as one of mutual respect. This world does not necessarily include all the inmates in prison, nor does it include all black or otherwise oppressed people, but it does include homeless people of both races who understand and respect each other, and who link their experience around a common theme of oppression and victimization. In this world, Connie sees that there are distinct

differences between the races but these differences are in lifestyle. Their commonality is one of bitterness about the ways they have been treated. As he references this world, he says that he might well be considered a "white nigger" as he links together their common experience around the theme of oppression and victimization, all of them being excluded from the white power structure.

Billy Bob

Billy Bob is a 50 year old man who describes himself as homeless for the fourth time, despite having refurbished an RV trailer and a 1972 Ford pickup truck. I met Billy Bob when he was a student who was on a program of "helping the homeless", and receiving public assistance for being "disabled". His ostensible goal was to become a physical therapist, and he was my student during his final semester in the community college as he pursued that goal. During the first part of the semester, as I recounted some of the work I was doing as a part of the project on the homeless, Billy Bob came up after class and expressed an interest in my work. He had, he said, been homeless himself at one time. After class we went for coffee and he began to tell me his story. In the process of its telling, Billy Bob began to talk about his experiences of homelessness. As he told his story, he remarked, "Oh, I guess I was homeless twice." Later in the conversation, he said, "Well, maybe I was homeless three times," to which he later, upon reflection, added a fourth experience of homelessness. During the semester, I had occasion to visit Billy Bob's "home,"

when I interviewed him. His home is an RV travel trailer that he has refurbished, and rents space in an RV campground. Even as we spoke that first evening at the cafe, Billy Bob began to reframe his future, suggesting that he might not continue on in college. His fantasy was to hook his "home" to the back of his "refurbished" pickup and head west to live in the desert for a while.

This interview was part of a continuing relationship I had with Billy Bob and took place toward the end of the semester, as he told me earlier that he had to wait until he knew me well enough to tell me his "story."

When Billy Bob describes his first experience of homelessness, it is as a child who had been placed in an orphanage, and then, at age 15, is discharged for disrupting the normal life of the orphanage, specifically the other kids. At that point, he found himself on the streets of New York, "with no place to go." As I inquired further, home, or a place to go, referenced a sense of belongingness, a sense of "being with" others. Now, living in his RV trailer, he considered himself homeless as he compared his living arrangement to his understanding of home, since there was no permanent residence, and no family, or group, to which he belonged, and hence "no place to go." Billy Bob began his story by talking about his first experience of homelessness, and during this part of the interview, he gives clues as to the meaning of the "home" that he is less.

Billy Bob: The first time I was homeless, I guess I was about 15 years old, and uh, I was scared. I'm trying to reflect on how I felt back then. I know I was scared, but then I was always scared. I was scared of everything all the time. I was whipped into submission as a child, so I was constantly in fear of people.

And uh I remember the feeling of not having any place to go, really left me cold in side, like, "oh my god, what am I gonna do now? I got no place to go." And the reality of not having any body that cared about me set in, and uh, but that was quickly replaced with the desire to survive. The fear was replaced with a desire to survive. What I mean by that is I mean eat and have money. Ok?

Q: How did you get to be homeless?

Billy Bob: Well, I was living in an orphanage, and uh, I was a very totally mixed up child. I didn't fit in there either. In the orphanage, and uh what happened in the essence was they kicked me out. They didn't want me there anymore because I was a disruption to the other orphans and kids that were there, so, uh, I kind of got kicked out of there, I was asked to leave—pushed down the stairs [laughs nervously]. Anyhow, I found myself homeless. I mean they didn't just push me out. They tried to get me a furnished room and a job. OK? of which I was incapable of handling both. So, uh, but once I was out, I was out of their hair. I was no longer their problem. I was on my own. And I was incapable of handling the job or a place to live. Anyhow I discovered that the way to earn a living on the street was prostitution. Not that I enjoyed it. Uh, not that I didn't enjoy it. (laughs) But, I didn't like it. I remember when I watched movies and a woman was raped or something like that happened to her and you would see her in the shower like she was trying to wash the filth off of her. And I remember doing that, you know, trying to wash the filth off me, you know, like the...the...the cause I knew, you know, homosexuality was wrong, it wasn't my bag, but it was a living, but I would try to wash it off me, you know like what I was doing to no avail. Eventually, you know when I first became homeless, I would live in the subways and uh I would steal food—I knew what stores got deliveries in the mornings for their bread and rolls and pastries and stuff, and I'd hit one here, one here, one here, and their milk, and I knew how to get into schools and they'd have their milk deliveries at 5:00 in the morning and I'd get a container of milk and have and you know like that and then meander around the city, find stuff, steal stuff, do stuff, you know, all petty and all survival, you know. But then, it turned out that the easiest way to survive was prostitution, and as a

child, you know, like somebody comin' up and sayin'--- hey, now, the only way I can express this is to be blunt and frank, o.k.?

Q: O.K.

Billy Bob: And a guy will come up and say, "Hey, man, if, uh, [stutters] I'll give you fifteen dollars if you'll let me suck your dick." So wow, the first time I did it, I couldn't even get an erection. I was scared. But afterward, you know, like survival takes precedence over everything and eventually you get to do it and you do it, and it was easy money. You know. And 15 dollars in that time, in the late 50's, was quite a bit of money for...for a half an hours work, and half an hour would mean going to the guy's place, getting the job done, and coming back. All with--We're talking half an hour. So, fifteen dollars--but I wasn't greedy, you know, only once was enough a day for me. Ok, Fifteen dollars I can go to [unintelligible] automat and eat, and I could go to the arcade and play, you know, and meander around the city, so it seemed like a good life except what I had to do for the fifteen dollars. Now, uh, I wasn't in to anything. There were times when I had been raped and forced to do things that I didn't want t' do, but that was beyond my control---

As Billy Bob begins his story, he links the first time he became homeless to fear as this becomes the focal point of the beginning of his story. He describes this fear as "--really cold inside." But there is much that is left unsaid in how he had always been scared earlier in his life because of being beaten into submission. Now, however, in more dramatic fashion, he links his experience of homelessness to the emotion of fear--fear of not having any place to go--of being placeless, fear of being alone. While biographically specific to the events of Billy Bob's life, this is woven into the mosaic that forms the horizon of fear that characterizes much of life on the streets.

The question that Billy Bob recalls asking himself, "What am I gonna do now?" summarizes his response to being alone and placeless. He then links his experience of homelessness to being a child of 15, and having to depend on his own resources, of which he felt he had none. This fear is connected to physical placelessness, but also to a lack of social place, with nobody to take care of him. While his fear remains real in his memory, it soon is supplanted by a more pressing priority—that of survival.

In short order, Billy Bob furnishes a backdrop for all of this. Being beaten into submission as a child, and then living in an orphanage, all serve as backdrop. At least in these contexts, he had somebody who was officially designated to take care of him. He had place (the orphanage). But then he was discharged from the orphanage, and recalls living alone on the streets of New York. As he tells his story, he paints a verbal picture of childhood helplessness in the face of difficult odds. He portrays a sense of desperation as he speaks of needing money and something to eat. The orphanage staff had found him a place to stay (an unfurnished room) and a job, but, as he says, he was "incapable of handling both. There is a sense of inevitability, then, that he was practically destined for the streets.

As Billy Bob leaves the structured world of the orphanage, and those who are officially responsible for his well-being, he leaves behind the moral order that he had associated with it. Within the structured world, Billy Bob had not faced the need to provide the resources for his own survival and, in his own

adolescent way, had followed the moral code of that world, at least in so far as prostitution was concerned. As he enters the world of the streets, without resources, he finds it a hostile world, one in which survival itself became problematic.

In the face of the need to survive in this hostile world, he narratively links the experiential realities of life on the streets to a scene in which he is propositioned to engage in homosexual activity for \$15 and accepts the proposition. In his depiction of this scenario that marks the beginning of his homosexual prostitution, Billy Bob recognizes that, according to some unarticulated criterion, he "knew it was wrong." He makes a connection between the homosexual activity and the cinematic depiction of a woman who is raped, and who tries to wash the filth off of her, suggesting a linkage between what he did and what seems to him as the dirt and filth that he feels are associated with the homosexual activity. Wrong, dirty, not my bag, all of these, but "it was a living."

The other activity that he links to survival was petty theft, and he presents multiple scenarios to depict this. But the easiest way of surviving was prostitution. In suggesting a linkage between prostitution and theft, both of which are illegal and immoral in the domiciled world, he suspends the conventional moral order in the face of fear and drive for survival. We began this section with his telling of homosexuality in the orphanage.

Q: Was that in the orphanage?

Billy Bob: Huh?

Q: Was that in the orphanage?

Billy Bob: No that was when I was out on the streets. I witnessed homosexuality in the orphanage, but I didn't know what was going on until I saw the hustling, and I said "Oh, that was what they were doing!" [laughs] Ok, when a john came and got a boy, you know, I mean when a counselor came and got a boy. You know what I mean? The only difference between me and them was the price, I guess. [laughs]

Q: The counselors came and got a boy--

Billy Bob: Yeah, they come into the rooms at night and get a boy, their favorite boy, and I don't know how they would go about it, or what, but they had their favorites, and now I know why those kids got extra, extra favors, ok? They thought I knew what was going on then, and that was a part of how they thought I disrupted the orphanage, although I had no idea at that time of what was going on.

Then Billy Bob returns to develop the narrative of his own life.

That was the first time I was homeless, ok? and uh, but I know this. I didn't like hustling the fags. I found, you know, between breaking, uh, larceny, breaking and entering uh, and stealing, versus prostitution, I found the B and E's more palatable than the prostitution, ok, but, it was also uh, neither one, I didn't like either one of them, but I didn't know how to earn a living and survive. I had jobs as messengers and I'd get lost in a park and stuff, or I'd get lost--I'd just disappear, and I wouldn't deliver the messages cause I'd be out playing, I was just too naive and too young to be doing, to be working for a living. Nobody ever taught me anything. I never was taught how to interact with women, I never was taught how to be an employee--I was never taught any of that stuff, cause I wasn't allowed to work. I wasn't allowed to deliver newspapers. I wasn't allowed to do any of that shit. Work in the grocery store, like most kids will work in the corner grocery store, back then they had corner grocery stores, ok, and the guy had the thing what you squeeze and you get to the top shelf and

get the boxes on the top shelf you know, you remember those things? ok, I remember all that, but I wasn't allowed to do that. But stealing, I was stealing since I was four years old. I remember the first thing I stole. I remember where, when, and how. I remember everything about it. OK? So, I was, stealing came natural to me. Prostitution was easier and simpler, but I didn't like it, man, plus I had been almost murdered a couple of times. Anyway, that was the first time I was homeless..... Then I ended up in a reformatory in New Jersey, about 17, 16 or 17, and I was there for six months, I was in county jail for six months waiting to go to trial, cause I wouldn't tell them who I was or where I came from, they had me as an adult. and then I went to reformatory for six months. So that's a year that I did. And if I had a family, I probably wouldn't a even been in jail. Because they didn't have anything on me, other than loitering, uh, vagrancy, in New Jersey, I was arrested for vagrancy, and that was, on the books, was unable to account for yourself. I don't know if it's still on the books as a crime, vagrancy, is that a crime? still?

Q: I don't know. I think, well, in certain states it is.

Billy Bob: Well, I was arrested for vagrancy, ok.

Q: That's wild!

Billy Bob: and I ended up doing a year's time for vagrancy. and they could have kept me longer, cause in New Jersey, they have what they call indefinite, indefinite sentence. They can sentence you indefinitely. and as long as they feel that you're not rehabilitated, they can keep you. and I'm talking about keeping you until the day you die.

Q: Good God!

Billy Bob: It's called an indefinite sentence, and they pull it mostly on juveniles like myself, because adults get lawyers. They got me a lawyer and he told me to plead non voke. You tell a sixteen year old, ignorant drop out, high school drop out to plead non voke, does he have any idea what he's pleading? No, well this is not homeless anyway. Non voke means guilty, at the mercy of the court. [laughs] ok, that's what I plead, non voke. Judge

says, "Do you know what you're appealing, pleading?" [Still talking, Billy Bob constructs the dialogue with himself]
 "Yes,"

"Oh, well, I'm sentencing you to Annandale, indefinite."

Any how, I got out of there, and uh, I had a parole officer, and he wanted me to have a place to live and a job, and I couldn't hold on to a job. I still was unable, and I'm still to this day, I'm unable to hold on to a job! OK? and I'm 50 years old.

anyhow, I couldn't hold on to a job, so I ended up going back into prostitution. As long as I had a place to live, he was happy. He wouldn't send me back to the reformatory. So I got back into prostitution. And I worked and prostituted, you know I worked in places like white castles, you ever hear of White Castle Hamburgers, Blue Castle Hamburgers, etc. I worked in places like that, you know, and learned to be sort of a half- assed short order cook, and prostitution and uh I's a better prostitute than a short order cook. (laughs) any how. That's what I did. I was a cute little kid, so I was marketable on the street. and that's what those homos wanted--a cute little boy. And so I filled their requirements. But I was totally lost.

Billy Bob concluded the first part of his story with a disclaimer that he was not homosexual. There had been times when he had been raped and forced to do things that he didn't want to do, but this was innocence. As I queried him regarding whether or not this occurred in the orphanage, he pictures himself as naive, with homosexual activity occurring, as it were, right under his nose, when he had seen counselors in the orphanage come and get their favorite boys, but didn't know what that was about. As his story returns to homosexual prostitution, Billy Bob reiterates that he knows he didn't like "hustling the fags," and found B&E's more palatable, but he didn't like either one. These, however, were his only options. He had not only suspended the conventional moral order in the face of his need to survive, but his own sense of liking and disliking as well.

Billy Bob then offers examples of his failed early work experience in more legitimate occupations, such as working as a messenger. Still youthful naivete prevails as he recalls either getting lost, or doing what kid's like to do—play. There was another side to his failure to learn, however, and that was that he "wasn't taught." about work, or for that matter, about women. Then he elaborates this failure even further. Not only is he not taught, but in the circumstances of his childhood environment, isn't allowed to learn to work.

Billy Bob then turns the focus of his narrative to the issue of stealing. He recalls that he had been stealing since he was four years old. This was a "skill" he knew.

In this entire section of his story, Billy Bob is painting a picture of a helpless child who has no access to legitimate means of support because of youth, naivete, inexperience, and lack of skills, etc. But he does have access to prostitution and theft. In a context in which he could have learned other skills, he portrays himself as likely having been moral, but as he was excluded from the domiciled world, he accesses the moral order of the streets as he is outside of the structured world. The conventional moral order is suspended in the placeless world of the homeless child at this intersection of life course and placelessness. As he references a linkage between his inability to keep a job then, and still not being able to at 50 years old, he depicts this lack of work skills as spanning his entire life, and this lacking has produced a lifestyle that is based on doing "what you gotta do" to survive.

While Billy Bob is careful in his attention to the details of his story, there is much that he is unclear about. Here he begins what he says is "the next time I became homeless."

Billy Bob: Let's see. The next time I became homeless, uh, I moved in with this family who moved down, who ended up moving down to south Jersey. And I helped them move, and I helped them paint their house and stuff, and then we didn't get along, so they asked me to leave, so I left. Then I was homeless. And I used to eat in this restaurant all the time and the people there didn't what--you know cause you know I was 18, you know -- by this time I was 18, and they said, what is this kid, cause I looked like I was 14 still, I had very baby face, you know, and I was small, in stature and size, and I looked like a little kid and they couldn't figure out what this little kid was doing out on his own. So they asked me to come live with them. Their daughter had a crush on me. And uh, they asked me to come live with them. So I did, and I adopted them. They didn't adopt me. I adopted them. And, uh, so I lived with them until I went into the army, and I started to get some semblance of life there, you know, I started to understand, I started to be part of a family thing, which I had never been before, and I liked it, but I was fearful of it because it meant obligations on my half, and I wasn't capable of obligations. But it worked out, and I went in the Army when I was 22 because both their sons were in the service, so I enlisted in the service even though I didn't have to, cause I was 4-f, but both their sons were in so I figured, well it's the American thing to do, you know, go to Viet Nam, and didn't get killed, ok, that's the American thing to do, so I went, I joined, I enlisted, and that's where I discovered drugs. OK, I came out of the service an alcoholic, a full blown alcoholic and into drugs, or any thing that felt good, whether it was pussy, alcohol, drugs, or whatever, anything that felt good I was into. and when I came back from the service they kinda wished I had never come back, cause I was a different person now. So I left them and uh from the time I was with them in 1965 is when I moved in with the _____'s, and oh yeah, when I was in the military I changed my name to _____ legally, and they kinda you know they went along w, they supplied all the paper work and I you know, I was too old for

an adoption, so I just became a n_____, and they were happy with that, and I was happy with that cause now I had a family, I had a name, I had, you know, I had a family and a name, you know, and I's incapable of handling it.

When Billy Bob says, "The next time I became homeless," that occurred when he was eighteen years old, he displays the on again--off again nature of his own status of homelessness, suggesting that for even the chronically homeless person, homelessness is not necessarily a permanent status. The "causes," should one inquire into those, revolve around a number of issues. These become clearer as he tells his story.

Attending to the details of his story, Billy Bob tells how he moved in with a family in south Jersey and helped them paint their house, but he didn't get along with them, so he left and was homeless again. Later, he was taken in by a family who owned a restaurant, and whose daughter had a crush on him. As he tells this part of the story, he accomplishes three things: First, he confirms his general innocence when he portrays his youthfulness. He does this by describing his youthful age and accompanying youthful appearance and his purchase of a false ID, and then his telling of the family's perspective of him as he says "What's a kid [who looks like he's 14 or 15] who's so young doing out on his own?" Second, by telling how he was the "cute kid" who looks to be only 14 or 15, he begins to develop the picture of himself which is completely different from other young male prostitutes, since he is attractive to girls. As he develops a close relationship with this family, he recalls that he adopted them and

continues to paint the details to the point that when their sons joined the army, he also enlisted. In saying that this was "the American thing to do," he is able to speak of some form of membership in the larger society as he locates himself as part of a family. While he liked his history to this new identity, he was also fearful of it, because this meant obligations. Billy Bob wasn't capable of "obligations," a theme that he further develops with the recurring sub-themes of being unable to handle jobs, relationships, or anything else because he wasn't taught to handle these things.

While in the army, he elaborates linkages to three occurrences that are significant. One is that he went to Viet Nam and didn't get killed. Second, with the support and encouragement of his "family," he changes his name legally to their name, and thus has a location of social belonging. Third, he learns to follow a new code, which was "to enjoy anything that felt good" in contradistinction to his earlier code of "doing what you gotta do," and this results in his coming out of the army a different person from whom he was when he first enlisted. Then he ties all three of these events into a common, and somewhat tragic, conclusion to this part of the story. Because of the change in who he was through following a new code, the family whom Billy Bob had longed for wished that he had not come back. The new code had produced undesirable behaviors of which they disapproved. As he looks to both society and family, he presents himself as moving again to the margins of the social world where, once again, he

would do whatever it was he had to do. He had a family and a name, but "couldn't handle it."

After a brief interlude in which we talked about the importance of "name," the conversation continued with my question:

Q: What was your name before?

Billy Bob: That's none of your business [laughs]

Q: But you were aware of your name?

Billy Bob: Uh huh. I changed it twice. Once illegally, and once legally. Any how, no I changed it three times. One time I changed it to William Robert Rogers because I thought, I was 15, 14 years old, and I needed identification and stuff to go to work, so I get a social security card. So I made up the name William Robert Rogers, and I came up with that because I'm being a city boy, I wanted something different, and what could be more different than Billy Bob? [laughs] And Roy Rogers was my hero, o.k. so, William Robert Rogers, Billy Bob Rogers, and if you think about it, it's humorous. You know [continues laughing] A kid with a Brooklyn accent named Billy Bob. This is what I was thinking. This was where my head was at...at 14, 15 years old-- Billy Bob. So I bought later on, about a year later I bought some ID, in New York City you can buy anything. I bought proof of age, a draft card, a selective service card, the whole nine yards, uh. So, a guy named uh no, the guy's name on the card was Richard Perpignan, and that's who I became. Richard Perpignan from Beeville, Texas, with a Brooklyn accent. Ok, but it worked for me and uh I was 18. I could prove it. See, I got an I. D. So, uh, that, anyhow, all that time from 14, 15, 16, I was homeless. Uh, I'd live wherever I could whenever I was homeless. Sometimes in the back of station wagons, at car lots, that's where I would sleep at night, or in the subway, or in the basement of buildings, uh I'd wander into basements, you know, looking for a place to get out of the cold and just sleep and be pr-, you know a safe place, you know, where I wouldn't get stabbed or murdered or you know, something happen to me at night. Night was a very difficult time. Uh, it was easy up

until about midnight or one o'clock in the morning cause you'd be out hustling. But after that, then you got cold, and there's nobody else around and you keep seeing the same cops, and you don't want the cops to be seeing you, your face, because you become familiar, and then they start slapping you around with their sticks. Just to get you out of town. And I used to work Newark New Jersey, and New York city, and if I wasn't doing b&e's, but at night, like I said, I was looking for a place to sleep all the time. And a lot of times you go home with a john and you'd crash there, you know, so that was a good place--most of the time that's what would happen. I would crash at the, John you got a mosquito right there [points to my forehead and keeps talking] ok he's gone, he's over that way, but he'll be back. Anyhow, homelessness. It became like I said to you once before. It's not the worst thing in the world to be homeless. but it becomes like a way of life, being homeless. You don't have any thing, you don't have a home, but by the same token, you don't have to maintain anything. You have no maintenance to worry about. You have no, you don't have to come up with rent, you don't have to come up with this, you don't have to come up with, you know? You just, every time you hustle a john, you got money in your pocket. You know---so you could eat. And I lived day to day. And I still live day to day, 50 years later. Uh, 35 years later, I still live day to day. I haven't, a lot hasn't changed.

As Billy Bob once again becomes marginalized in his narrative, his gaze shifts once more to being homeless as a child, signifying by this shift an association that he made about opportunities lost. Here, although very briefly, he includes two points of significance. First, he discusses the illegal ID and the legal ID. The significance of these was that it was through the ID's that Billy Bob had a name. For him, there is significance of "name," as it is in his name that he roots his identity. Yet as he returns to his earlier period of his youthful homelessness, Billy Bob distances his identity from his name as he tells again of stories when he was 14, 15, and 16.

During this portion of the story, Billy Bob speaks again of fear--his fear of being stabbed or murdered. On the other hand recalls his fear of being recognized by the police. In telling of his fear, there is an implicit recognition of the conventional moral order, not necessarily agreement with it, which is seen in his fear of the police. If they saw him too much, they would become familiar with him, and attribute to him illegal or immoral activity and then either arrest or harass him. As Billy Bob links his experience to fear of the police, his story becomes an example and part of the broader horizon of fear noted by Henry, Trine and others. In this, fear of the police is one of the more common themes of fear to which many homeless people link their experience of homelessness. It is practically universal and guides much of their behavior.

Fear is related to time and place, grows out of them, and reflexively interacts with them. As Billy Bob talks of fear, he is telling of it as background to his narrative accounts of B&E's and prostitution. But because of his high visibility during the night time hours when he was doing his "work," he would also gravitate toward the conditions that produced fear. Billy Bob depicts himself as having no other options. That being the case, he portrays himself as being confronted, not with moral choices, but with the need for survival.

Finally, in this part of the narrative, Billy Bob points out that homelessness is more than not having a home. It is a lifestyle. Within this lifestyle, there are disadvantages and advantages of being homeless. On the one hand, the homeless person doesn't have anything, but on the other he has

no responsibilities. This he connects to his present status of being effectively homeless as he portrays himself as still living from day to day. This "condition" persists even now at his age of 50, which is 35 years later.

Then Billy Bob continues his story of being homeless the second time.

This might well rather be phrased "the second stage of homelessness"

Billy Bob: OK, being homeless the second time, when I got out of the service, I had different jobs in the vending company, oh, yeah, I was going back to 1965, when I went to radio and tv school and I wound up fixing coin machines in the coin machine industry, and I did that before I went in the service and I did that after I got out of the service, but in 1976, 75, I think, 76 I got married, I had a kid, but I'm getting more and more into my alcoholism, o.k., and it became a full time job just maintaining my alcoholism rather than maintaining any thing else, so uh, I moved over to Atlantic City and got a room in a cheap hotel and just maintained my alcoholism. I was getting a small pension from the VA for being disabled, and that would take care of my child support, so I didn't touch that, and uh, I just hustled and worked the boardwalk and did different things. I remember I used to sell, cause I was a vet, and in New Jersey, a veteran can get a licence to peddle, vend, or hawk on the streets and they're the only ones that can do it. So I used to do that. I used to peddle vend, and hawk on the streets of New Jersey, or on the boardwalk, and like mothers, day, carnations, you know, on the boardwalk, and like everyday, I was peddling something, you know, hustling, or scamming, or something, you know, and I was always in drugs and alcohol and peddling and scamming and whatever, cause by this time, I was too old and ugly to prostitute anymore, so, uh, this is what I was doin'. You know, I was just maintaining my alcohol habit. And then I couldn't even keep the furnished room, so I became homeless again. and I moved under the boardwalk, which wasn't so bad, because I discovered how to make a hooch under the pier. A hooch is a place to live. How to make a house under the pier totally undetected by the police dogs they send under there occasionally. And it was awesome. And it was warm, and it was incredible, and it was, the way it

was set up, the way I had rigged it, it was ingenious, if I don't mind saying so myself, it was, it was clever, anyhow, I did that for one winter, and decided that New Jersey in the wintertime and homelessness— so I decided to move to Florida where I could be homeless and on the streets and not worry about the cold. The cold is what kills you. I don't know how they do it up there. They still do it, though. Stay homeless all winter long. [Whistles] Any way, I moved to Ft. Lauderdale where its warm all year round. You know if you got cold weather three days out of the year, it's, you know, that's it. So, I discovered in Ft. Lauderdale there's a lot of abandoned buildings. People just go broke in Ft. Lauderdale and leave their homes and stuff, and you can just move in till you get kicked out. O.K.? And the jails are so full at this time that they weren't holding people for stuff like that. You know you were trespassing, but so what. You know you might get beat up by the cops and "get out of here and don't come back," you know, so you go to another abandoned building, and you can live like that, living in abandoned buildings and not worry about...Today these buildings have become crack houses, and you've heard about them, o.k., Before they were havens for guys like me who were alcoholics, worked at the labor pool, and lives in abandoned buildings.

So the second time I became homeless was like 1980, and I stayed homeless until the end of '81, and I met, I got a steady ticket at that...at a factory, and I'd go every day to the labor pool and get my ticket, and go to the factory and work. And then I started drinkin' in bars cause I had money cause I had a steady job, a steady ticket, o.k.?, and then I met a chick in a bar and we hit it off, you know, we uh, we drank and fucked equally as hard, o.k.? so, so uh, we ended up moving in together so I wasn't homeless anymore. I remember one guy, met him at the labor pool, he says, "hey man, I want you to come down to my condo after work today, and come and see where I live," and there was this big old building, and around the building there was this big old wall, and it was covered with, covered with trees and bushes and shrubbery, and in between the bushes and shrubberies he had a big cardboard box and he called it his condo. [laughs] I thought it was serious, you know, and it was a big [kite?] but he was just like me, he was homeless just like me. We ended up on the same ticket, so we pulled in together and got an

apartment, you know, we shared an apartment. It turned out that he was a homo, anyhow, so it didn't work out because, you know I may have been a prostitute, but I wasn't a homo, you know. Some people might think that is a contradiction in terms, but its not. Uh, anyhow, I met this chick and we moved in together, and this is toward the end of my drinking around 82, 83? 84. The end of 83, I turned myself into a treatment center, no, it was the beginning of 84 I turned myself in to a treatment center, and uh, I'm proud to say that I haven't had a drink since.

In this section Billy Bob looks to adult horizons as he continues his story. As an adult, he no longer depicts himself as the helpless and abandoned child, but now locates himself over against the disease of alcoholism and the conditions of nature. In the face of all of this, Billy Bob presents himself as ingenious and resourceful. He is locating himself in relationship to the interview, but he does that through linking to horizons that, when articulated, locate him in relationship to his own self understanding, and surviving with a degree of artfulness and class against great odds. Yet he does not portray himself as a victim. He is simply an alcoholic and a loner, and he maintains the theme of doing what he has to do in the face of these difficult conditions. The question for Billy Bob is not only how he will survive, but how does he survive with class and live a reasonably good life.

As he begins this part of the narrative, Billy Bob, with eloquence and candor, depicts his slide down into the depths of alcoholism, which he sees now as the basis of being homelessness in his adult life. Then he tells of the subsequent beginnings of his climb upward to sobriety and a better life. He

locates the beginning of his life as an alcoholic in his experience in the army, which is the focal point of his gaze. After his discharge from the army, he portrays his life as spiraling steadily downward. He finds regular employment, then within a year or two is married. Before long, he and his wife have a baby. All the while, Billy Bob looks backward to a life of more and more drinking until, finally, he sees his full time job as maintaining his alcoholism. He repeatedly articulates this recurrent theme as it is manifest in numerous ways. He cannot hold a job, but goes from job to job--because of alcoholism. Failing in work, he leaves his wife and child and gets a room in a rooming house. He now becomes a street vendor and tells of doing whatever he had to do, including selling illegitimate products, and scamming, or conning people with whom he came into contact. He was too old and ugly to continue his prostitution, but he still had to do something to maintain and support his alcoholism, which was the theme around which he continued to build his story. Within a brief period of time, he found himself unable to keep his room, so, once again without shelter, he "moved in under the boardwalk" into a "hootch," which he describes as a place to live. He notes with some pride how he was able to make a house that would not be detected by occasional searches by police and their dogs. Billy Bob has a sense of pride in all of this, and he fares well until the cold of winter overpowers him. He, like many other homeless men, articulates what is a common condition of life on the streets, and serves as a basis of commonly shared experiences when he says that it is the cold that kills you. His life is defined by the conditions

of nature. He portrays himself as adroitly adjusting to all of this by moving to Florida, where he could be homeless and still stay on the streets without the danger and discomfort of the cold.

Billy Bob is persistent in his attention to the details that comprise his life. Against the confusing background of his story, Billy Bob is careful to maintain an accurate chronology of the events to which he links the narrative of his life during this period. For example, at one point he appears to get ahead of himself, but he had omitted the part of the story about the homosexual in the condo. To maintain the time line, he revisits that part of the story and fills in the details, then his story returns to "the chick" with whom he shared an apartment. As Billy Bob weaves together these strands of the story regarding his sexuality, he balances the story of the homosexual male with the contrasting relationship of "the chick" to amplify his heterosexuality. In linking the two together, he specifies that he, himself, is not a "homo", and implies that the man's homosexuality may have been responsible for the end of their apartment sharing. Then he says that his discomfiture may sound like a contradiction in terms, considering his own history of male prostitution, but then he simply says that it's not, as he constructs the majority of his adult life around "chicks." This highlights the horizon that Billy Bob recalls of being a teenage male prostitute as being nothing more than doing what he had to do.

As Billy Bob continues telling his story, the specific theme on which he focuses is the termination of his relationship with "the chick," which ended when

he turned himself in to a treatment center. This is likely the major turning point in the story, although he references it in somewhat matter of fact terms.

As Billy Bob continues his story, he tells of being released from the treatment center, having no place to go, and once again living in his car. He parked it at what he termed "the AA place" and helped out around there, doing odd jobs with the AA place essentially being his home. This provided him with enough money to eat and buy the necessities he needed. As Billy Bob continues, he portrays himself as a survivor who is not proud, but who is ingenious, as he describes how he modified the interior of his car to accommodate his sleeping. This exemplifies a cliché within the AA community, which was "growing comfortable with his own uncomfortability."

This period ends with one major change in theme. After moving to Florida, and finally moving in with "this chick," which included much drinking and sex, Billy Bob finally checks himself into a treatment center and comes to terms with his alcoholism. From this point on in the story, while he sometimes alludes to his past drinking, the events to which he links his experience in shaping his story have to do with sobriety. He depicts this by saying that he's proud to say that he hasn't had a drink since.

Billy Bob continues to tell his story of homelessness after he stopped drinking. We begin by talking about his separation from the woman with whom he had been living.

Q: **Now this was after you lived with this woman?**

Billy Bob: Uh huh, right, we split up. She went her way, I went mine, o.k., I turned myself into a treatment center, then I got out, of the treatment center, and I had no place to live so I lived in my car, and I used to go to AA meetings and hang around the AA place, and live in my car, sleep in my car, that's all, you know, cause I'd go eat, I'd go do the things I had to do, I still had my small VA pension, so that kind of helped me a little bit, although most of it went to my wife for child support, uh, I would uh, live in my car and find work, light work, you know, odd jobs around the AA place, to take care of my meals, so all's I needed was a place to sleep, so I slept in my car and I made, I broke the back seat, the front seat so it would fold back, and I rigged it so that it was a collapsible seat like some cars have now, so I rigged it so I could sleep in my car, and you can get used to anything, the human body can get used to any accommodation. We call it in AA growing comfortable in our own uncomfortability, o.k.? Anyhow, I figured well, uh, this is kinda the way my life is going, I don't want to work a steady job, I don't want to drink, I just want to recover, and I want to be left alone. And if I'm gonna live in a vehicle, I'd better get a bigger one, so I bought a Dodge Van and I'd live at the marinas where I used to pick a lot of work because Ft. Lauderdale is a boat town, a lot of boat people, a lot of boat works, uh I end up workin' on boats and I got to know the marinas and they were always gettin' robbed, so they wanted security so they let me live in my van, they let me use their facilities, the showers, the phones and everything, plus I would get work there and I would make 15-20 dollars an hour workin' on boats. And I lived in my van, and I fixed my van up so it was really nice. It was really comfortable, you know, and I'd maintain my recovery and this went on, let me see, I lived in my van fer uh, two years, from '84 to '86, no, I got the van '85--86 and 87, I lived in it and it was the best part, it was one of the best times in my life. It was one of the happiest times in my life. It was totally based on recovery from alcoholism, and it was so comfortable and I had set things up, it was more like a boat than a van because I had it set up much like this RV, ok, only on a smaller scale, and a little cooking stove and everything I needed, and I would just buy stuff on a daily basis, you know, groceries and stuff that I needed. I'd go out and buy fresh veggies and I'd go down to the beach and cook em and watch

the waves, you know, it was beautiful. It was a beautiful experience

Just as Billy Bob's time in the army was pivotal in his homeless and alcoholic career, he describes his life in Florida as the interval of time in which he begins the turnaround and the genesis of his sobriety. The period begins on much the same note as the prior era ended. Billy Bob discovered abandoned buildings as a place to stay. In Florida, he is not afraid of the police, since they don't imprison or jail those they apprehend for trespassing. They only "run violators off," and when this happens, he finds another abandoned place to serve as his home.

There is a certain amount of inevitability in Billy Bob's self presentation when he says that this is the way his life is going. He will remain forever the vagabond, the wanderer. As he looks toward the variety of his possibilities, he doesn't want to work and he doesn't want to drink. He only wants to recover and be left alone. His needs are minimal. He needs a larger vehicle, and he meets this need by his buying a van and working around the marinas. As he tells his story, he portrays himself as not only a loner, and ingenious, but he blends together those elements that depict him as having worth and value. He portrays his ingenuity by his acquisition and restoration of his van and his worth by his income and by his providing security for the marinas. He is nevertheless a loner, an adult flower child who has finally evolved a sober and ascetic lifestyle. Throughout his story, Billy Bob is resourceful, and conforms to certain moral

obligations in that he paid his child support out of the only regular income available to him, that being his Veterans Administration pension.

Billy Bob continues by talking about a brief time period during which he was involved in more conventional work.

Billy Bob: ...and then in '88 I got a job managing a condo, or coop, down on the beach with a bunch of rich people, and that lasted for 13 months, and that was one of the longest lasting jobs I've ever had. But they were miserable bastards. They were all rich, and they were miserable. Anyhow then I got this job in Africa, and I got back with my wife that I married in 65 or 66, 75 or 76. O.K. those were the times I was homeless. Now..

Q: You got back with your wife when you went to Africa?

Billy Bob: Yeah, and I'd travel back and forth between her and Africa, but when I got laid off, we had to live together and it didn't work, so I was homeless again. O.K., so I came to Jacksonville, and I had a pick-up truck, and I put all my shit in the warehouse, and I had a girlfriend, an ex-girlfriend that I used to live with living here in Jacksonville, so she showed me the ropes around Jacksonville, what to do, where to go, and when, and I decided to go to college, and I had myself a little studio apartment, and I saw that the cost of the apartment was way to high, so I went homeless again until I saved up enough money from my pension and doing odd jobs or whatever for an RV that needed work, and I bought the RV, and lived in it while I fixed it up. Is that, having an RV homeless?

Q: No, well, you tell me.

Billy Bob: If I had my druthers, I'd rather live [in an RV] than in a home. But in all my years of institutionalization, when I say that I mean foster homes, orphanages, the military, jail, etc., I learned a lot about institutions and how to manipulate from within or without the institution to get what I need. And I found that if I keep my needs down, I don't have to struggle through life like most people do, I don't have to struggle with a job to maintain headquarters and stuff like that.

In a curious turn to his life story, just as he is on the verge of "making it" in the domiciled world, Billy Bob allocates three sentences to the longest job he ever had. He summarizes this period by saying that the condo owners "were miserable bastards. They were all rich, and they were miserable." As he has grown older and more mature, Billy Bob pictures both space and time as shrinking. He notes very briefly, for example, that he got a job in Africa and attempted reconciliation with his wife that he "married" in '65 or '66, '75, or '76," the exact date it seems he can't remember, even though these details spanned decades and continents. Without revealing the nature of his transition to Jacksonville, he simply notes that he came to Jacksonville where an old girlfriend showed him the ropes. Living simply, he manages to get along in the domiciled world for a while but then goes homeless again until he can save enough to purchase an RV that he restored. It is at this point that he questions whether or not living in an RV is being homeless. From later conversations, he was quite explicit that it was and that he intended to remain homeless for as long as he lived.

At this juncture in the narrative, he presents his rationale for living as a homeless wanderer. After learning how to survive on limited resources from "getting what he needed" from institutions, Billy Bob has "found that if I keep my needs down, I don't have to struggle through life like most people do, I don't have to struggle with a job to maintain headquarters and stuff like that."

Billy Bob's story remains coherent, with themes, transitions, conclusions, and summaries. The part of the story quoted above exemplifies his description of his transition from New Jersey and New York to Florida, and from childhood through young adulthood to adulthood. As time progressed for him, so did place change, until he emerges into a different world, never one of affluence, but increasing comfort with his life, sobriety, and a sense of order. From this point on, as he tells his story, he looks to radically different vistas to organize the meaning and the story of his life. His linkages to dereliction and poverty have become past tense and the connections that sustain the meaning in his life during this period are of a different order. Now, however, being homeless means refurbishing an RV that he later lives in, and owning a patched up '72 Chevy pickup truck. But Billy Bob continues to link his homelessness with having no roots, and no permanent address. He also connects homelessness with a measure of poverty, and dependency on governmental programs, most of which is in the form of veterans benefits. Given these resources, Billy Bob views the contours of his life as conforming to his dreams of simplicity, being left alone and working on his recovery. In this there is a shared linkage with many homeless people around the common theme of aloneness. When I have mentioned aspects of Billy Bob's lifestyle to other homeless men, his is their vision of the good life. When I have called into question the "validity" of his homeless state, many have concurred that Billy Bob is homeless. The presence and amount of aid and pensions that he receives, while amounting to more than I

would have suspected, is not unheard of. I have met and talked with six other men who receive some form of pension, and who use this pension in different ways. Some use their funds to purchase alcohol or drugs. Others, like George, save at least a part of their income. Whatever the specifics of their biographical linkages, being alone and being left alone is the horizon of meaning for many on the streets.

As Billy Bob's story turns from an extended narrative of childhood homelessness, Billy Bob elaborates a world in which he acts both in ways that he regards as moral and almost simultaneously as immoral, depending on place and circumstance.

Q: Now, tell me about, talk for a minute about life on the streets. For example, I've heard you talk about clusters of places.

Billy Bob: Oh, homelessness, yeah, being homeless as a street derelict, actually being homeless.

Q: You have talked about, you worked this place and that place, now there's some sense of place that I'm getting from you.

Billy Bob: Yeah, ok, when you're homeless like that in a city, like Ft. Lauderdale, that's where I was homeless the longest and the most, except for New York City, but New York City, everything revolved around Times Square, that's where my bread and butter was, that's where my hustling was, that's where I got Johns, o.k., to pay for me, so everything, all my life revolved around Times Square. I was always within walking distance, but in New York, it's different. A subway ride for a 15 cent token, and you're back to Times Square, whereas in Ft. Lauderdale, public transportation is almost nonexistent, and what there was, it kind of sucks. So, your main food, your bread and butter is the labor pool, so your whole life revolves around the labor pool, and everything you do is centered around that. In other words, you're always within walking

distance of the labor pool, ok, because you had to be there in the morning and you spent most of your mornings in the labor pool waiting for your ticket. A ticket is a job. You get there at five o'clock in the morning, the first sign first come, first serve for tickets, ok, and you want to get there as soon as possible you want to be early for signatures, and the guy, when calls come in, "I need five guys over here, you know, uh, you'd go, you know, and I ended up working at a ticket at Gould SEL Electronics, they make computers and stuff, and I worked in the storage room, stockroom, warehouse. And I had that ticket for quite a while, and there was a lot of overtime, so I'd work, by Wednesday, I was on time and a half, and for a street person, a homeless street person who works for minimum wage, time and a half, then by Saturday, I'd be working double time, and I'd work seven days a week there. It interfered with my drinking, needless to say, but it was good money and it started to look like I was going to be to go places, but anyhow, but lets get back to the environment, the place, the labor pool. The labor pool was usually centered down town, close to the inner city, the bus terminals, the center, the hub of the city, ok, that's where the labor pools are usually located and you'll find the homeless utilizing labor pools, because the labor pool, you owe allegiance to no one. You just show up in the morning and you get sent out on a ticket. If you don't get a ticket you go wandering around the neighborhoods looking for opportunities. When I say opportunities, I mean I might walk down streets looking for anything, looking for something to steal that I could pawn, looking for open car doors. People leave change on their dashboard, and be it ever so petty, it's still something to eat, a cup of coffee, whatever, you know.

Billy Bob changes his emphasis as he moves to tell how he survives on the streets in terms of sleeping accommodation. When talking about having a place to stay, he tells the following story with a sense of pride.

Billy Bob: There was never any problem with sleeping because you could flop anyplace, in a park, you know. I myself chose abandoned buildings. Different guys chose different places. Some guys lived under bridges. Different people chose deafened things. I chose abandoned buildings because a lot of them still had

furniture in them. Some of them were closed up. Rich people come down and buy em, set em all up, something happens and they never come back, they just keep sending their taxes in, but they never come back. So, I would break into one of those. I could live there four or five months undetected, living in a beautiful home. Know what I'm saying? I had one place that was absolutely gorgeous. And my being there protected the place because there was other guys that would break in and trash the place. You know what I mean? They'd shit in the toilet when there wasn't any running water. They didn't have the common sense to go turn on the water. They don't know how. I know how, ok? And they'd trash the place, you know. I found one place I lived in for damned near six months. And I cleaned that place up and guys had been in there before me, and trashed it. I cleaned it up. I turned the water on so that I could clean out the toilets and stuff where they just piled stuff, and I would scare people away, other guys would break in at night. I'd scare em away. And I would, my being in that building was actually beneficial to the owner and he didn't even have a clue, cause God knows who he was or where he was. Eventually the building was sold, people bought it and took it over and did whatever it was they wanted, but for the time I lived in that building, I was beneficial to that building's well-being, and nobody had a clue. That's the funny thing. Its like in a fairy tale, the elves making the shoes for the guy, and he'd get up in the morning and the shoes were made, but he didn't have a clue who did it or how or why, or any of that, you know, they were just there. Well this guy, if he had come back to see his place, when, I guess, when the realtors came there to look at it, it was nice. But if I hadn't a been there, it would have been totally trashed, you know. A lot of work would have had to been done. And nobody, the funny thing is that nobody has a clue about this. But that was my nature, to leave a place better than when I found it. And I did that. I take pride in that. Being homeless, I take pride in taking care of somebody else's property..

Billy Bob continually references his sense of right and wrong. But often, as in this story, he goes beyond this. When he was in search of a "place to stay, he had no compunction about staying in someone else's house when they were

not there and it was vacant. Billy Bob describes how he would stay in vacant houses that had furniture in them. This would become "his place," and he took a proprietary interest in it. As long as the owners were not there, he could see no reason not to use it as a residence. As he tells this particular story, he interprets his stay and the care he took of the house as actually being beneficial to the house, despite the owner's lack of knowledge of his "residency." He rationalized this by the meticulous way he took care of it. A part of this "maintenance" was to keep the place safe from other homeless people who would vandalize it or, in his words, "...when other guys would break in at night. I'd scare em away." With Billy Bob, however, his metaphor was not the guardian angel, as had been the case with Ronald at the Prudential building, but rather the "fairy." By being the fairy, and maintaining the property, he was effectively justifying his staying in the house. The place (residence) would be better off with him there than without him.

Billy Bob never relates any rationale for this behavior, but he does note that it was "in his nature" to take care of others' property. In this he sees himself as living, if not within the norms of domiciled world, at least living outside of the norms of many homeless street people. In this story, doing what he had to do, from his perspective, intersected in a different way with the structured domiciled world. Yet Billy Bob's story is at the same time one that is shared by many homeless people, but articulated most clearly by George as he talks of the morality of living off the residuals of others abundance and waste.

When Billy Bob represents himself as being an adult, he draws from experiences in which he, like many others on the streets, lived in an economy of barter. In this economy it is expected that each person involved in the exchange obtains what he or she needs and that what is offered will be fairly represented. Even when telling stories of his youth he has a sense of right and wrong, drawing on different stories that illustrate both a sense of knowledge of the conventional moral order, and of his own moral order. But then, in his attending to the completeness of his story, he continues by telling of times when he was not so "good."

Billy Bob: By the same token, there were other times when I was homeless when I broke in and actually caused damage, breaking in as a larceny, you know. Double standards.

Q: You did a lot of stealing?

Billy Bob: Yes.

Q: You stole. You'd check a car out. You'd open it and see if there was any money or anything in it.

Billy Bob: Yes, but I would never steal a car, though. Just what's in it. I remember one time

Q: And you'd never break a window.

Billy Bob: Right. I remember one time a drunk john picked me up and took me back to his place, and before we went back to his place we went and had some drinks. And I wasn't old enough to drink, but I had id to prove I was. And I seen he had a twenty dollar bill. Well, when we got to his place, he crashed, he went to sleep. So I figured here's an opportunity to rob him, so I went through his pants pockets and there was no \$20 there. Where was he last? He was in the bath room. I went into the bathroom, and in the laundry hamper, I found a

hundred and twenty five dollars. I took a hundred and left him twenty five, so he'd have enough money to get back and forth to work for a week. And what kind of thief is that. I was a thief. I stole his hundred dollars, but I didn't take everything he had. Does that make me honorable?

Q: Was there a code that you were living by. How did you decide to do that. Did you have a sense of right and wrong?

Billy Bob: Yeah.

Q: Did you share that with any other people? Did ya'll have a shared code?

Billy Bob: No. Anybody else I knew would have taken everything and anything that they could carry. I never stole jewelry, or anything that could get me caught. Only cash. But then I never took it all. I just wasn't a greedy thief. What would you say? If you woke up and somebody had broke into your house, and you had two hundred dollars on the table, and a hundred and fifty was gone, what would you say? What would you say?

Q: I guess I'd say that I didn't understand it.

Billy Bob: I guess he don't either. I understand it as not being greedy. How the hell is the poor guy goin' to get back and forth, I'm robbin' him. Do I have to take his sig, how's he going to get back and forth to work and eat, and at that time 25 dollars would have lasted him a full week. Subway tokens at that time were fifteen cents, so he could have gotten back and forth to work, and he could have eaten every day. And if he didn't pay his rent yet, well then he's a damned fool. Because he went out drinking before he paid his rent. Right? OK. Well, I don't know, I had some sense, I don't know what's goin' to happen to me when I die and go to heaven and I got to answer to God for "You stole from this guy, but you didn't take all that he had. So hold out your left hand. OK. I don't know what to make of it. Most people don't know what to make of it. What would a psychiatrist say? "You're a bastard with a heart." I don't know. What would you say? I didn't like to do, you know, there were times, I did have times where I was

destructive, as you know, a juvenile delinquent, when I did destructive things. But mostly to scare the shit out of people. Not to hurt them, just to scare em. You know, a nuisance, like putting toothpicks in doorbells, or lighting dog shit on fire on somebody's stoop and ringing a doorbell. [laughs] I thought that shit was funny.

Q: Did you ever have any sense of allegiance to downtown, to Times Square, was it a sense of allegiance, or comfort, or--

Billy Bob: I felt a certain amount of security down there, because I could earn a living there. And yet, right in the next borough was people that knew me-- Aunts, and Uncles, and I could just hear them sayin' if they saw me, 'Did you know that Richard was hustling? He must be a homosexual,' and things like that. In the next borough, ok., and a borough would be like between downtown Jacksonville to the beach. That distance. OK, eventually everybody goes through Times Square. They might have seen me. I have no idea, you know.

Having established that he understands a sense of the conventional moral order, Billy Bob tells a variety of stories that illustrate how, where possible, he has always followed a code that included the conventional morality. But when circumstances don't allow for that, as when he was destitute and without resources to earn a minimum amount of money needed to obtain the basic necessities of food, etc., he continues to survive by the code of doing what he has to do. He illustrates this by drawing from his memory of the times when he stole from unlocked cars, but did no damage to the car, and only took what he needed, and those were objects that were readily available

On the other hand, he draws from his memory of going home with a drunk john to represent the underlying compassion he felt toward others, even when stealing from them. In this story he finds himself in the home of a drunk john

who has picked him up and, remembering that he has money in his pocket, finds it and carefully calculates the amount the man would need to get to and from work and survive for the week. He then steals the remainder, but he is careful to point out that he left the \$25, which he thought to be sufficient. As he tells the story, he is puzzled as to how he could be both moral and immoral at the same time, and in the end, characterizes himself as "a bastard with a heart."

Concluding this particular story, Billy Bob returns to the question of social position as seen from the perspective of kinfolk in his youth. He opines that they may well have known, or may have even seen him in downtown Manhattan around Times Square hustling, but, again, that's o.k., as in his own mind he was simply surviving by doing what he had to do. As he tells this part of the story, Billy Bob brings together social and physical space. Times Square is his "place of business," and is separate from his domiciled domain. At home, or around friends and family, he would have found it unthinkable to discuss or engage in prostitution, but when left to his own devices without resources, and within the domain of his "work," he sees survival through the rationale of "common sense," and acknowledges this imperative by adhering to a different moral order—doing what he has to do. In the above narrative, Billy Bob continues to link the moral order to structure and structure is tied to geographical and social space.

At one point in the story, when Billy Bob references his experience with prostitution, I asked him about heterosexual prostitution.

Q: Did you ever engage in prostitution with women?

Billy Bob: Yeah.

Q: They paid too?

Billy Bob: Yeah, nobody rode free. I told you about when I was living with four prostitutes in El Paso.

Q: Was that a barter, or a trade off?

Billy Bob: I was their handy man. I would fix things for them. I was always very clever with fixing things. When I was, I was stationed in El Paso, and I met this girl that used to dance in this bar. She was a go-go girl back then. And we became friends. I used to go there and get drunk every night and we'd talk and I'd go get a different piece of ass. I liked Shirley, you know, she was kind of neat. We both left that bar and went to other places, went about our business, you know, and I didn't see her. Then one day, I went into a new bar that opened. And here's Shirley owned it. And one of her johns bought it, and he was a gynecologist and he bought it for her so he would have a place to go and she'd be there, and we paled around. I liked her son. He was a little kid, and he needed the guidance of a man in his life. Anyhow, I used to take him for motorcycle rides. I was into motor cycles then. I'd often trip around in the desert. And Shirley had this bar and she had four girls working for her and then I started hanging around Shirley's house, and they'd all fuck me, or I'd fuck them, or whatever. And I was Shirley's, you know if something was broke, I'd fix it for her and then I got kind of moved in, settled in, moved in and the next thing you know me and Bubbles were an item.

Q: Bubbles was one of the four girls?

Billy Bob: Yeah. Bubbles asked me when I was getting ready to leave El Paso, she said "If you stay here with me, you'll never have to work again in your life. I will take care of you." And I said "naah." I don't know why I said "naah." But you know I tried to go to college then, but I was too much of an alcoholic. My mind was on alcohol and drugs and not on studying.

After I posed the question regarding heterosexual prostitution, Billy Bob describes the way he met Bubbles, a woman with whom he lived for a short time. As he tells this short story, he expresses what turns out to be his underlying philosophy regarding all relationships. "Nobody rode free." This philosophy is born of necessity and expediency, and is both reflected in, and exemplified by, this story. Everyone has needs and wants, and everyone has some level of skill and resources. Therefore, relationships are matters of barter and exchange in which one gets what he or she wants by furnishing something to the other that is likewise wanted or desired.. He continues this theme throughout the story until he is asked by Bubbles to stay with him until he leaves El Paso, and all he can say is "naah," without understanding why he says it.

But Billy Bob also presents a soft side of himself in this story. While he downplays this side of himself, he still mentions it, as contradictory as it may seem. He spent time with Shirley's (the prostitute) son, taking him for rides on his motorcycle, because "he [the son]needed the guidance of a man in his life. This ambivalence toward other intimate relationships, including family, is characteristic of many homeless people. On one hand, they desire intimacy and closeness, but on the other hand, they either do not possess interpersonal skills required to maintain those relationships, are unable to manage their drinking, drugs or other habits that have become destructive to intimate relationships, or they do not feel that they have anything to offer a relationship. Billy Bob seemed to frame his possibilities of relationships from all of these qualities. Regardless

of his reasons, however, though he made many attempts at establishing intimacy, they were never long lived.

Later in the conversation, we returned to the relationship of drinking, or alcoholism, to homelessness.

Q: Go back and talk about the relationship of alcohol and alcoholism your life. Drinking's contribution to your homelessness, or whatever.

Billy Bob: Well, alcohol was my drug of choice simply because it was easiest to get and it was the most social. In other words, I like bars and I like women, and I go to bars and get women and drink. Only I got into alcohol. Alcohol made me 10 feet tall, it made me debonair, it made me suave, cool, it made me, it made me hot, it made me, you know, all the things that I wasn't. I was totally insecure. It made me all the things I wasn't. Anyhow, alcohol became my reason for being. And everything I did, alcohol was based on or related to it. I love marijuana, too. Marijuana was, I still love marijuana, although I don't do it because it would lead me back to alcohol, but I love Marijuana, and I used to smoke marijuana by the pound. Everything I did was based on getting high, and what it was, I was so uncomfortable under my own skin I had to get out from underneath it and the only way to do that was through alcoholism, so it was like an escape, but it became an addiction where I was addicted to it. And then when you live in the street, alcohol makes it, if you're stoned or drunk, alcohol makes it comfortable where you can crash any place on alcohol, you can be, go any place or do anything on alcohol, you know, you can live in the street on alcohol, because alcohol makes it ok, alcohol makes you comfortable sleeping on a park bench, alcohol you know, you can get to the point where instead of falling asleep, you pass out. And that's what alcohol used to do for me, I would pass out, and in the morning, I would never wake up, I would come to.

Q: How long were you an alcoholic?

Billy Bob: 16 years. I drank alcoholically for 16 years. I started when I went into the service at 22, and I finished at 39. But I continued to smoke pot for four years, and then I discovered that I had to give it all up.

Among the many pictures Billy Bob verbally paints of himself is that of an alcoholic. As the interview scanned more and more of the contours of Billy Bob's life as a homeless alcoholic, I pointedly asked him to talk about the relationship of alcohol and alcoholism to homelessness. In his responses, he locates himself squarely vis a vis the rest of the world as one who is to be identified first and foremost as an alcoholic. Billy Bob describes life on the streets as uncomfortable and unbearable, sufficiently so to "need" to be anesthetized to it on a permanent, or quasi-permanent, basis. The story of his life is totally centered on "getting high or drunk." He says that everything he did, after becoming a full fledged alcoholic, was based on getting high.

Billy Bob links getting high to two very different phenomena. One of these is an illusory self that alcohol helps him to create. This fictional self is seen effectively as compensation for, and a defense against, the pain he feels from living on the streets. Part of this pain is the shame he feels around women who are important to him. This may well be accentuated by his background as a male prostitute. Alcohol accomplishes more than this, however. Alcohol/drugs provides an escape from the painful experience of what Billy Bob pictures as "the self within."

For the balance of the interview Billy Bob casts alcohol, his addiction to it, and his present sobriety, as the centerpiece of his narrative. At times, he reflects on the days when he was drinking. At other times, he focuses on his own sense of pride at having overcome the addiction. Either way Billy Bob leaves alcohol at the center of the story that he tells of himself, and alcohol, in either form, remains one of the more significant polarities around which his own narrative is told, both to himself or to others.

For a short time, Billy Bob interrupted his narrative of his own life to talk about homelessness in general. At the end of this interlude, he returns to his own viewpoint as a part of his narrative, describing the basic differences between years gone by and the present, and the way he now views homelessness. After the digression, he rhetorically asks the question:

Billy Bob: You know what homelessness to me is? Now, the way I look at it. It's camping.

Q: The difference between you now and then---

Billy Bob: I don't drink.

Q: You don't drink and you've got an RV that you park at certain places.

Billy Bob: Right.

Q: So the possession of an RV

Billy Bob: Legitimizes my emptiness. My inability to hang on to anything. Cause I can take the RV with me. But if I had a house, yeah, a house to me is a prison. Owning a home is a prison.

Q: Is it, other people you've known who spent time on the streets, is that a common kind of feeling, is that.

Billy Bob: I don't know. I never really talked to them about that. We all had our own reasons. Some were running from the law. Some were like me, just incapable of handling things, never taught, never really taught or incapable of hanging on to anything like a steady job, a relationship, or a home.

As he begins to talk more about the present, Billy Bob's story takes on a more reflective and contemplative tone, as he links his story to contrasting life experiences. As he talks about the difference between his experience of homelessness as a child and as a young adult just out of the army, and his later experience of homelessness as an adult, he sees two major differences: homelessness has become camping and he who at one time had been a serious alcoholic has stopped drinking. His ownership of an RV does not mean that he is not homeless. It rather confirms, or, as he says, "legitimizes" his emptiness. In this regard, he links homelessness with two things: not owning or possessing "things," and if he did, not having a place to put them. The few belongings that he has in his RV are not important. But he makes one further linkage. Billy Bob, through this specific linkage, shares the common horizon with Trine, Ronald, or Bub in seeing that ownership, or regular occupancy, of a place is restrictive. Having a house means having a permanent residence, and that, for him, would be to live in a prison. Ownership of property, rather than being liberating, as many might well think, actually turns out to be entrapping. This theme is prominent among many of the chronically homeless. As he grapples with his

own self identified status of homelessness, Billy Bob, like George, identifies homelessness as a lifestyle, similar to camping.

This is Billy Bob's story, and he recognizes that while it is shared among others, it is not universal among homeless people. As he references the others, he acknowledges that each person has his own story to tell as to why he or she became homeless, for, as he says, "they all have their own reasons." Among those reasons, he enumerates two: some are running from the law and some are, like himself, not able to "hang on to anything."

For a short while, Billy Bob departs from his narrative to talk about a lady who is his neighbor. After he discusses her briefly, noting her poverty status, he continues by comparing himself to her. Then we resume our conversation about the horizons of Billy Bob's experience as a homeless man and his relationship with others who were homeless.

Billy Bob: Welfare recipient, medicare, medicaid. Now I'm doing the same thing, but I don't have all of those entrapments.

Q: You spent time with other people who lived on the streets. What kinds of stuff did ya'll talk about?

Billy Bob: Mostly about drugs and alcohol and women, feel good things. Or opportunities.

Q: Was there any sense of wisdom amongst those people? Did ya'll have a shared sense of knowledge?

Billy Bob: We all kept our secrets to ourselves. There was no camaraderie in the sense that you know, I got you back. Some traveled in pairs. I was a loner. But I was a loner before I became homeless. I wouldn't share my life with any of these guys in the labor pool because, for one thing, I considered

myself more intelligent than they. For another thing, I kept myself clean. Cleanliness was very important to me. I wasn't like them, although I was homeless, I wasn't like them. I felt ingenuity left me above them.

Q: Did you ever have any sense of shame about being homeless?

Billy Bob: Yes. When I met a beautiful woman, then I was ashamed of who I was.

Q: Ok, but you didn't spend time just feeling shame.

Billy Bob: No. Alcohol numbed me from that.

When I asked Billy Bob what he and others on the streets talked about, he referenced the only things that they held in common—alcohol, drugs, and women, all of which he describes as “feel good things.” In addition, they talked sporadically about opportunities. As I talked with other homeless people about relationships on the streets, they recounted the same types of conversations, and as I sat with a group of homeless people around campfires in a hobo camp, or sat under the trees with them in the parks, the conversation was much the same. There is a broad range of diversity in their lived experience as they narrate biographically specific linkages to their experiential realities, but only a narrow range in the kinds of things that they allow themselves to discuss (i.e. themes, or horizons of meaning), or even know how to talk about. The result is that they spend most of their time in conversation, telling their same tales to ever new acquaintances as their interactions tend to be brief and transient.

In his telling depiction, Billy Bob links his experience of homelessness to a comparison of himself with other homeless people. Among his own reasons

for not establishing close relationships with them were that he considered himself both more intelligent and cleaner than they were. These issues continued to be at the forefront of his life story. As he talks about himself, again and again, he utilizes different incidences to set himself apart from the other homeless people. When he connects with his memory of shame, he says that he had none. When he was homeless and met a beautiful woman, he felt shame, as other homeless people may well have felt, but alcohol numbed him from that pain.

At another time in the interview, the conversation turned to talk about homeless people who became street preachers, and those who invested much time in talking about religion. This brings him back to the relationship of alcoholism to homelessness. He begins with a question regarding the sanity of the religious folk, and then links the issue of sanity to his experiences with homeless people in general.

Billy Bob: Is it maybe they're nuts? Just plain..

Q: No, no they survive.

Billy Bob: Well you don't have to be sane to survive.

Q: And their life is about as sane as those who don't talk about religion?

Billy Bob: Who are you talking about? Homeless people that do this?

Q: Yeah, down in the parks.

Billy Bob: Oh, down in the parks. How do you know they're homeless?

Q: Cause they say they are.

Billy Bob: Oh. Do they say why they're homeless?

Q: Yeah, a lot of them say drugs and alcohol.

Billy Bob: Ok, that's mostly the case, isn't it?

Q: I don't know about mostly the case?

Billy Bob: Drugs and alcohol become their priority over home life, you know what I mean?

Q: I hear this figure thrown around all the time. Fifty percent of the people out there are drug users and alcoholics. Is that accurate?

Billy Bob: Yeah. 50% of the people are there because they want to be there because they're alcoholics. They're not there out of any you know, like unfortunate circumstances. They're there because of their alcoholism; they're alcoholics and, for an alcoholic to be homeless, its the easier, softer way. To try to maintain a headquarters in a home, because everything they get they can drink--Now there are times when being homeless and an alcoholic is very uncomfortable, but there are times when being an alcoholic and homeless is very comfortable. You know, like Sunday morning, its very uncomfortable to be homeless cause you got no money and you got no alcohol. That's a miserable time for an alcoholic. Cause you need a drink, and you're broke. And there's no place open, even if you had money.

After more time is spent in talking of his own experience with alcoholism, we returned to the problems of mental health and alcoholism found among homeless people. At this point, Billy Bob is no longer simply telling his story, but his story includes his own perspective of others, who like him, are homeless.

Q: Ok, now I want to talk some more about alcoholism and homelessness in this sense. In my experience, from what I've

heard, the people who drink and are, possibly more typical, view people who are religious and don't drink, or say they don't drink, and I have no reason to doubt that, they're sort of religious fanatics, side walk preachers, hermits and recluses who are almost like monks,

Billy Bob: Well, I put them in the category of those who are insane. 50% of the people who are homeless are alcoholics, 20% are their temporary, their life circumstances are

Q: Where did you get these figures?

Billy Bob: I got em from, I did a research study on the homeless, and I got from one professor who cris-crossed, a professor in Tennessee, a sociology professor who crisscrossed the United States as a homeless person

Q: Do you have his name? If you can get his name for me, I'd like to read it.

Billy Bob: No, I can't remember it. I have his research somewhere, and if I can find it, I'll mail it to you. Ok, it was a research paper, and I did ok on it. It was for a speech, for a speech class. Any way, his figures, along with the others, other statisticians came up with 50% are alcoholics who want to be there, 30% are nuts, and have been being released from mental institutions because of the economy since 1959, and 20% are there because they're temporarily out of place. It's a temporary condition.

Q: Ok, I hear those figures, and I'm not talking about people in the missions. They may be in recovery. They were alcoholics, they were on drugs, they were into prostitution, they were whatever, so I'm not talking about those people, but when I'm down in the parks, in Hemming Plaza, when I'm down in the food lines when a church is feeding them, I don't recall many people who aren't into alcohol or drugs. Now, a lot of them are insane, you know, the mentals as they are called. A lot of them are down on their luck because they are temporarily out of work, but most all of them are heavy into alcohol or drugs. Now, how many of those I would call alcoholic, I don't know. Because I have real questions about what an alcoholic is.

Billy Bob: Ok, on a particular day and in a particular place, are you seeing all the homeless?

Q: No.

Billy Bob: Where are the others?

Q: That's just my question. Am I in places where I run across just the alcoholics and the addicts?

Billy Bob: Yes.

Q: Where do I find the people who are not alcoholics and addicts?

Billy Bob: I don't know. I can tell you where the alcoholics and addicts are because I traveled with them, you know. I was one. I don't know where they are. If you find out, I'd like to know. Where they are and what they're doing. But I am giving these figures. You'll find them in temporary shelters, you'll find them in missions. You'll find them in places like that, cause that's the only places that are available to them, but they're not street wandering alcoholics.

Q: But the real street wandering alcoholics and addicts, those are the ones that are really streetwise and know how to survive

Billy Bob: Right, they could also be the most dangerous, they also most likely are there because that's where they choose to be.

Q: Now, when you talk about spending time on the streets, you make reference to people who are running from the law. How many of those people are running from the law?

Billy Bob: I don't know. I met one. Me and him were paling around for a while in Ft. Lauderdale, and we were on the same ticket at Reynolds Aluminum, and the following year I came back, and this was when I was snowbirding in Florida, and I came back the following year, and we got the same ticket at Reynolds Aluminum, and one of the guys at Reynolds Aluminum was also a cop in Pompano Beach. And he was a nice guy, you know, he tried to help us and stuff, you know. But he told me,

he said "You know that guy from last year, I says yeah, and he says he's wanted by the police for rape. He raped a girl here, and evidently he raped a girl and robbed her parents or something, so the law was on his case, and I had no idea. I thought he was just like me, a nice guy, but me and him almost got into a knife fight.

Q: So you didn't come across many people who were wanted but you heard about them, you came across one or two?

Billy Bob: Right.

Q: Is there any sense of regard for the law amongst most of the homeless?

Billy Bob: Well, they fear the police.

Q: So it's the fear of the police rather than regard for the law...

Billy Bob: Fear and not regard. It's a fear.

Beginning with talk about homeless people and religion, Billy Bob quickly returns the conversation to alcoholism. In his analysis of alcoholism and street life, Billy Bob cites figures of the number of people who are alcoholic, insane, or temporarily displaced. To buttress his figures, he cites a sociology professor in Tennessee who crisscrossed the country as a homeless person. In all of this, Billy Bob is establishing himself as an expert on alcoholism and the streets. Then he draws on an often utilized epistemology—personal experience as criterion of knowledge for "what is and what isn't." Because of his experience of being there, he "knows." He knows where the street wandering alcoholics are to be found, and he knows something about what their life is like. In talking about the homeless people who are on the streets because they are wanted by the

law, he again links his understanding and his portrayal of life on the streets to his own experience of being associated with one man who was running from the law.

Finally, Billy Bob assesses the overriding fear of homeless people—like Trine, they have an overriding fear of the police. Being constantly in fear, Billy Bob implies that these people, like himself, are simply doing what they have to do to survive in a frightening and unstable world.

A final example of Billy Bob's assessment of homeless life is the story he tells of the life of women on the streets that he told in response to my questioning.

Q: Do you find most of, Now here's another thing, I hear the homeless talking about, a lot of people talking about sex. And then I hear women who are homeless, there's a lot of prostitution. Did you come across many women who are homeless?

Billy Bob: No, not too many. Mostly guys like me. A hand-full of women, and they were really off the wall, they were women who were like required to be on lithium or something, and they would stop taking their medication, and they'd go begaga, and they'd end up homeless. Most of the women who were homeless were off the wall. A few of them were like us. Alcoholics, you know who were out there because they were alcoholics or addicts, and they were homeless and they'd have a guy that they'd pal around with, and they'd find a place to crash, a cardboard box a shack in the woods, or whatever, but they'd have their steady guy, and they'd pal around together and he would kind of take care of her in a smaller scale than a husband and wife today, you know, maintaining a home, they would be maintaining on a smaller scale, that's all.

Q: Because "I'm trying to..."

Billy Bob: Almost every homeless chick I found out there had a guy.

Q: Did they keep the same guy for a while?

Billy Bob: Yeah. Women are like that. No matter what their life situation is, they kind of want, women are monogamous, men are polygamous by nature, whether they're homeless or not is irrelevant. It's the nature of the beast.

Recalling other stories that I had heard, I asked Billy Bob specifically about his knowledge of the more grotesque experiences to which women are subjected.

Q: One of the things I've found is that there are a group of people who live on the fringe of domiciled life, if you will. Maybe they are people who will eventually become homeless. I don't know. But they are people, and in particular, women, who sort of hang out in abandoned buildings, or somebody's apartment, or somebody's house, or a crack house, or whatever. And they'll do whatever they have to do to get drugs. That may mean doing oral sex with a dog.

Billy Bob: I've never seen it, but there are cruel guys who will say "Yeah, you can have some of my crack. Go give that dog a blow job." And if she wants the crack worse than she wants to give the dog a blow job, although I would say give me a blow job. But I wouldn't hold anybody hostage like that. Its not my nature. You know. Give me a blow job because you want to, not because I got something you want. But then, if you're willing to do that, I don't want you anyway. God knows what you got. I was very particular. I wouldn't screw any chicks on the street. I wouldn't, you know, I have to pick her up in a bar. I had morals, you know. No, the odds of getting a disease are greater from a street chick, and I'm not particular fond of diseases, you know. I kind of like to take care of myself.

Q: It just feels to me like people traffic a lot in drugs and sex on the streets.

Billy Bob: Oh, women do, because they have something to offer. What else do they have to offer. Very few of them work out of the labor pool because they might be sent down to unload a train. a freight train. You know women can't unload a freight train. Women can't unload a freight train and carry a hundred pound bag of gravel, and shit like that. Right? Women can't go down to the construction site and lift concrete blocks all day. So, what do they do? They wait til the guys get home and they hustle the guys. Ok, they're both street people and some of them do have a steady guy. Some of them do get a steady ticket. But they're not secretaries. They're homeless. They don't maintain a wardrobe that a secretary would need. Ok? So they do what they can to survive. If they have one steady guy, they take care of him. They blow him. They fuck him. And he feeds em.

Q: And he lets them stay there?

Billy Bob: If they have a place. Of maybe she hangs around with him for protection. Wherever he goes, she goes. ok? So he protects her. And in his own insane way, he loves her. It's just like a family thing. Except that its on a much smaller scale.

Q: It's like a family thing. When you say its like a family thing, what

Billy Bob: A man and a wife, a man and a woman.

Q: So what constitutes family in that case?

Billy Bob: The man and the woman.

Q: The man and the woman

Billy Bob: In a monogamous relationship

Q: So it's sexually monogamous.

Billy Bob: Right, and they could be living in a tent in the woods, but they live in a tent in the woods together. Or they could be wandering around every night and do a different building, but

they do it together. He takes care of her. He looks out for her. And she in turn loves him and blows him, or whatever.

Q: There's kind of an exchange there.

Billy Bob: Right.

Q: Do they get close?

Billy Bob: I don't know. I've never been into a relationship with a woman in the streets.

Again, Billy Bob appeals very little to first hand experience as he tells of sexual relationships of people on the streets that are outside of conventional norms, but he does tell his own story once again. He doesn't have any experience with women on the streets with which to link his experience, so those relationships are outside of his "expertise." Knowing what he knows, however, these more bizarre behaviors would not surprise him. But then, using the suspected experience of others as a mechanism of contrast by which to portray his own life, Billy Bob talks once again about his own sexual conduct. By comparing himself with others, he depicts himself as being clean and taking care of himself. He would never have any relationship with the women he finds on the streets. He depicts these women as crazy and perhaps dirty. On the other hand, he portrays himself as having morals, which means, among other things, that he picks "chicks" up in bars, rather than on the streets. Here, again, Billy Bob portrays himself as being a "moral person." The moral code may be his own, and one not shared by others, but nevertheless, he considers himself to be guided by this code of morality. The general sense one has is that Billy Bob

considers many homeless people to be, at best, primitive in their social and sexual relationships. It is his moral code that separates him from them.

As a final depiction of his wisdom about life on the streets, Billy Bob tells of how women survive when they are homeless. Being unable to work in the labor pools, they engage in the economy of the streets, the system of barter, offering the only thing they have to offer, which is sex. This results in relationships of exchange in which women connect with men, and in the most basic of ways, they take care of each other.

The last time I saw Billy Bob was two days before Christmas in 1996. He was headed west on an interstate highway in his 1972 Chevy pickup and pulling his RV trailer. His destination was "the desert." He was going, as Tommy would have said, "like a turtle, with his house on his back."

CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Consistent with much social research, the interviews included in this project do not fall neatly into clean cut categories. For example, in looking at the ways in which Angel displays his construction of time, there is much said about place. Or as Shorty links his present life to various spatial horizons, he adds much to the other horizons of meaning in question. As I have reflected on the interviews, I have seen that much of this overlap further enriches one's perspective on the social world of chronically homeless people as they themselves experience it. For this reason, I am briefly reviewing and conceptualizing the major themes of the interviews that I have analyzed, and, in addition, am including additional themes of importance that are pervasive as they appear throughout the interview narratives. Finally, I am including two organizational patterns that relate some of the themes more specifically to each other. In order to more clearly summarize the themes and show the linkages between and among them, I am developing this summary in the following order. To begin with, I will summarize the themes of time and place. Following this, I will show, from the perspective of the homeless, how these two themes are combined into what I have called spatio-temporal intersects and matrices and

how they are seen as components of the social structure of the domiciled world. Third, I will briefly explicate the implications of the absence of these spatio-temporal constructions for the world of the homeless. Following this, I will summarize the theme of "A World Outside of the Law," as this world is regularly referred to by many homeless respondents. Next, I will show the relationship of many chronically homeless people to the conventional moral order and the consequent moral order of the streets as that moral order centers around the themes of violence, alcohol and drugs, fear, sex and gender, and relationships. Finally, I will show that chronically homeless people, living, as they do, outside of the structures of the domiciled world and shaped by the experiential realities of life on the streets, tend to be arrayed along a continuum of socialization--maladaptation--adaptation. Taken together, this chapter will present some of the primary, but emergent, outlines of life on the streets as experienced by chronically homeless people.

Time

Time for chronically homeless people, as with members of the conventional social world, is constructed in interaction. However, among homeless people, with interaction being sporadic, there is little joint construction of time. Thus, time as constructed by chronically homeless people bears little resemblance to the conventional time constructions of the domiciled world.

One way to conceptualize time from the perspective of chronically homeless people is to contrast it to that of the domiciled world, as time is a basic structural dimension of that world. As I view my own horizons within the domiciled world, time is structured in relatively ordered terms. It tends to be regularized with agreed upon units and junctures of appropriateness. It is something outside of the self that we have created and to which we hold each other accountable. In the normal ordering of life, we determine many events by time, sequentially ordering them to accommodate valued events by not scheduling them concurrently. Through the structuring of agreed upon time, we coordinate work life, civic life, and leisure activities. We plan for futures, we construct the life course through the celebration of benchmarks, and we assign temporal order to the domestic, or the familial. Dysjunctures in the ordering of time often produce periods of trauma, periods of breakdown of the structured world, or periods of withdrawal from the conventional social world. And the list might go on.

Time for chronically homeless people, as gained from observing their linkages to the experiential realities of the temporal, is very different. Rather than being sequential and ordered, it tends to be existential and random. Rather than ordering the world around an agreed upon structure of time, time is "seen" in the events of their lives. Rather than being a resource to be used, time is frequently an adversary, something to be killed, or a vacuum to be filled.

Marie has never been socialized into conventional time. Non-structured time is a way of life for her, as she has no set time, or schedule, by which she sees her mother, or current boyfriend. She meets her mother *if* her mother happens to be at the right boyfriend's home. She will meet her boyfriend *if* their schedules coincide and "if he come back." She is unclear about the temporal ordering of major events in her life, such as giving birth to her children or the exact times she lived with her grandmother.

For those other than Marie, there are other differences between time in the homeless world and the domiciled world. While most homeless people have memories of conventionally structured time, i.e. clock time, or calendar time, it does not typify the way they see the world in their homeless state. There are other relevancies for chronically homeless people that eclipse time as we know it. These include things that are neither relevant nor regularly considered in the domiciled world, such as survival, fatigue, inebriation, or whatever conditions or events that may prevail as priorities in the moment. There is no negative consequence for this lack of conventionally ordering time, so it continues to slip further and further away from consciousness. At some point in their lives, as they move from homeless to chronically homeless, they begin to forget about time as they have known it. The points at which they remember conventional time are the times they go to work, when they work at the labor pool, the times they are to meet representatives of social service agencies, or probation or parole officers, or the times they expect food to be available. Shorty articulates

a weekly ritual regarding Sundays, when he is critically aware of time to meet a fairly rigorous schedule. Henry displays the absence of conventionally structured time as one of the bases for the failure to develop deeper relationships with other homeless people.

In other ways, these stories depict how these chronically homeless people "see time," meaning that they do things when they observe events in which they either participate or want to participate. They see dark, when they go to sleep, or daylight, when they wake. They see small groups of people walking together, and moving in a direction that they "know" means going to the church for food on Sundays. They "see" the call to "guarding," as Ronald did when he saw people going to work at the Prudential building. Or they govern their lives by the movement of the sun across the horizon as Snuffy did in marking the time of day.

For many homeless people, time is residual in that they often think of time outside of normatively ordered duration. Trine thinks of time as "his" when he thinks of the middle of the night. Ronald thinks of residual time when "place" is his outside of the working hours of Prudential employees.

There are, however, shared constructions of time within the chronically homeless population. Practically universal among them is an understanding of "mission time," a temporal commodity that they may be given, and that they carefully spend, on Sundays, when their own contrast of self with those who work is not so stark, and when participation in meals and other forms of community is

possible. Other than this, they typically speak in broad terms, such as "all day," "sometime," "most of the time," "daylight," "dark," "good times," "bad times" or "scary times."

When homeless people await events, or when they await residual time, time hangs heavy on their hands. It is often times adversarial, as something that Cy thinks of as needing to be "killed," or a vacuum that needs to be filled. Cy tells how he looks to the clock, not for the purpose of ordering his life, but to measure the passing of time, which is his adversary.

There is frequently resistance among chronically homeless people to "following other peoples' rules." Many of these rules have to do with ordered time and regimented schedules--when to wake up, when to have lights out, when to eat, when to be out of the building, etc., and Trine includes these rules when he talks about the shelter being like a jail, one facet of which is the imposition on their lives of conventionally ordered time.

These texts of these narrative life constructions as I have encountered and listened to these interviews, portray people whose lives do not, and cannot, mesh with the lives of the structured world, because their lives, of necessity, are ordered outside of conventionally ordered time. Without common constructions of time the structures of the domiciled world remain irrelevant and alien to them, and their lives are consequently lived outside of the corollary structures of the domiciled world that are rooted in conventionally ordered time.

Place

The conventionally ordered world is not only structured around agreed upon constructions of time, but also agreed upon space, or place. It is practically axiomatic in the structuring of life in the United States that a fundamental ingredient in organized social life is "place." We have home towns, communities, or neighborhoods to which we lay a proprietary claim. Because place is relatively stable in this regard, we are able to build pasts, project futures, and in between these, we construct our present. We order personal space into place with proprietary rights that center on this place. When we possess geographical place, as this is located within the arena of rights, we have some sense that we "belong" in that space. Because of the normative constructions of boundaries, we feel safe within the place to which we have legal rights. When those boundaries are violated, our social order contains provisions for the punishment of those who violate them.

Our sense of place is not limited to geographical place, however. Within the ordering of place, we have homes that typically are houses or apartments, and around which we organize the most intimate aspects of our lives, bestowing upon these a variety of designations signifying the familial. The familial organization in turn creates for us a basic sense of social space, or membership, and an enhanced sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is extended to other social entities, such as work organizations, friendship groups, or governmental units.

Basic to both senses of place, is home—a term that denotes both physical space to which we are entitled and social space, and suggests belonging within a social group. Homeless people, as they tell the stories of their lives, frequently return to the common theme of their lack of a sense of entitlement in relation to both physical and social space. When Angel talks of twenty-four hour shelters, he speaks of homeless people whose lives are built around space and resources that are provided by others. Cy tells of spending time at the missions when he has “mission time” available. Otherwise, he talks of being able to spend some time with his sister, but it is his sister’s house and her choice as to whether or not he stays there. On several occasions, Cy tells how she exercises her right to control his time spent in her home, or space. Otherwise, he periodically sleeps on his sister’s porch or in the weeds by the railroad track, both places being “residual space.”

A common claim to space is expressed by many respondents when they speak of “catholes.” These catholes, or small areas of space to which these people lay claim, are highly tentative, however, in that they are not “owned,” nor are they protected by any legal or moral order. Variations on the idea of “catholes” are found in Billy Bob living in abandoned buildings, Henry living in the warehouse with a key to a lock that marks his space, or Shorty’s recounting of a small space on the concrete sidewalk in front of the labor pool. In these stories, the spatial references are to geographical space.

With the exception of Shorty, there is little or no reference to social space, or present membership, in a recognized family of any kind, in the narratives. Only fictive families are referenced in the present. On the other hand, many of these respondents build their sense of "home" around another theme; a lack of belonging or entitlement to social space. Rick has no sense of social belonging, or family, and thus no sense of belonging anywhere, even though he has periods of time during which he can stay in a rooming house. Jimmy depends on the missions for food and a periodic place to stay, but expresses no sense of belonging there, and the recurring theme in his story is that he would rather be alone. Placelessness is, for him, a way of life. Marie tells of a sense of social place when she talks of her relationship to "Bo," or to her mother, but the basis of her occupancy of these social spaces is questionable at best, and her regular social place, or sense of belonging, is unpredictable. However, as Marie has never come to depend on a sense of social space through conventional socialization, she is effectively unaware of her sense of placelessness.

The sense of place, or placelessness, is, like any other part of homeless people's lives, best thought of in terms of a range of experience. While Cy, Rick, and Marie seem to have no sense of "place" or belonging, others tell of belonging in a variety of ways. Reiterating this same theme as it is told in her interview, Cindy has had a sense of belonging as long as "the party" lasts, and she has a place to stay. Staying with her mother was something she felt entitled to do if she liked, but chose to do otherwise because of her mother's rules and

her mother's control of both the physical and social space. She stayed wherever she crashed, but she felt a sense of belonging as long as she was a participant in a "party." Angel tells of his own sense of place as being in the future, but it is that anticipation of future "place" that transforms his present state of homelessness into one of belonging after all. Both Trine and Dutch, when linking the meaning of their lives to places characterized by the term "beach," link their experience of life on the streets to homeless people with whom they interact on a regular basis and characterize them as friends or family.

One experience of place to which some of these people link their understanding of belonging is that of "turf." Ronald has laid claim to an area around a large office building. This has become his area to protect in order to preserve his own sense of turf. Shorty connects his sense of place to a horizon of "turf" in demarcating an area of town in which he, and the tramp circle to which he belongs, have a sense of familiarity with each other and share knowledge of where to find resources. Billy Bob links his experience of belonging at one point in his life to his occupancy of vacant or abandoned houses that he "maintained" with a sense of proprietorship. Bub links his sense of place to "the lawd's world" in which he feels at home and defines by the availability of food and resources in the form of game.

The themes around which more frequently these people link their experiences of belonging are, however, those horizons that are derived from a common sense of alienation, or common experience of deprivation and need.

Dutch refers to those among whom he lived as his family, but he depicts these people as related by their common experience of placelessness. They shared food and much of the sustenance of life, and lived in their common fear of the police. Trine links his experience of placelessness to experiential realities centering around the same theme as he points to the array of people gathered at the labor pool and says that they are his friends. Their commonality is found in his telling of their perception of persecution by the police and courts. They point to behaviors by the police and other agents of power. They argue that these behaviors are designed to make them feel unwelcome as those who wield power in the community seem to want to rid the area of homeless people in order to attract tourists and those who come to live at the beaches only periodically for short seasons as a second residence. Connie continues to be angry with the "establishment" and sees his place as being with those who have no place, and who necessarily suspend the moral order in order to survive in a hostile world.

The commonality among all of these stories that link to some sense of social or geographical place is found in the lack of permanence and the shifting nature of place. Henry has seemingly come to terms with this through embracing his alcoholism and his cathole with his key, Bub through embracing a lifestyle related to placelessness, or Billy Bob working out some regularized place to live flexibly on a quasi-permanent basis with his RV and pickup truck.

As these people tell their stories, any sense of home, as conventional family or primary group, is either erratic or not available at all. Socially, for the

most part, they exist outside of the boundaries of the familial, regardless of how it is defined. With the exception of George, who portrays himself with his resourcefulness and utilization of resources as finding and maintaining some linkages both to his own sense of self as participant and member of the community, this lack of rootage in "home" leaves these homeless people without feelings of entitlement in the city, and roots from which to lay claim to "place" in the domiciled world.

Spatio-Temporal Intersects and Matrices

Time and space are constant themes throughout the life stories of homeless people. The absence of conventional time, the presence of alternative temporal constructions, existential time, or absence of conventional space, or placelessness, and the presence of alternative constructions of local place in the forms of catholes, place as resources, or safe places are but a few of these temporal and/or spatial themes. In the world of homeless people, as in the world of the domiciled, the spatial and temporal dimensions do not occur separately, however, but intersect as primary dimensions of events, that, when contextualizing and shaping behavior, or action, produce what might be known as spatio-temporal intersects. As these become regularized, the sequence of spatio-temporal intersects produce spatio-temporal linkages that in turn produce expectations as to what will occur. For example, going to a downtown church for food on Sunday morning is an event. This event typically occurs at certain times

and certain places and becomes a spatio-temporal linkage. Other spatio-temporal linkages are seen in the lives of homeless people as well. When dark comes, for many it is time to sleep, but there remain for most of the homeless people certain places to sleep, "catholes." The labor pool (place) opens at a certain time in the morning. This is a spatio-temporal linkage that produces the expectation it will continue to occur. For many homeless people, this is their world of work, and demarcates a primary component of their life. Although some of these linkages may be somewhat regularized, none of these spatio-temporal dimensions are as stable as within the world of domiciled people.

The spatio-temporal linkages of homeless people, like those of domiciled people, do not occur independently of each other, but are linked together in the stories of these peoples' lives. The spatio-temporal linkages and their interconnections form spatio-temporal matrices, and these in turn encompass and shape their lives. This may be compared with the spatio-temporal intersects, linkages and matrices of the domiciled world. When Henry refers to the "club," he is referencing what we might understand to be the spatio-temporal matrix of the domiciled world. From his vantage point, this constitutes a major part of the "framework" of the structure of that world, and produces a generally structured social world. When he says that the homeless people "don't have no club," he is referencing several things. First he references a lack of consistent sequencing of events and consequent unstable spatio-temporal linkages. With

unstable spatio-temporal linkages, there can be no expectations of certainty vis a vis their social world in relation to that particular linkage.

With unstable linkages, or even linkages that are stable, but are outside of the spatio-temporal matrix of the domiciled world, the spatio-temporal matrix of the homeless world is an unstable and uncertain context in which homeless people construct and live out their lives. Many homeless people link the experiential realities of their present circumstance to this unstable spatio-temporal context with its incumbent uncertainty. They attribute much of their emotional state, the quality of their relationships, along with its incumbent moral order, and their consequent behavior or action to it.

The narrative life stories of homeless people is replete with references to this uncertainty. Marie knew where to meet her mother within broadly defined time constructs, but only because she knew where her mother's boyfriends lived. When the conversation turns to her present relationship, there is no apparent way for her and Bo to meet again as time and place are not active constituent elements in their relationship, unless by pure chance. As he tells of some of the relationships of people on the streets, Billy Bob's assessment remains consistent with Marie's situation. Men and women "hang out" together all the time. They do everything together; the reason being that if they don't, they lose each other. This is seen in process in Marie's narrative as she considers the question of whether or not she will see Bo again, or at least see him "tonight."

With reference to his own life, as Billy Bob changes place, time changes with it. Consider, for example, those times that he's in Times Square vs. those times he's back in his home territory. These two worlds are spatially and temporally separated. His "work" remains around Times Square, and his "family" relationships remain away in New Jersey. When these two worlds overlap, it produces instability in the spatio-temporal matrix that constitutes Billy Bob's world, and produces uncertainty on his part as to how his family and friends would view his "work" if they should see him within it. This is normally not a concern as the two worlds are separated. Henry's life narrative further reflects this link between space and time as he compares life on the streets in two different eras. "I mean, back when I first started livin out here, I didn't have no trouble wid' nobody. But now, I do. Back den, it was people was jus livin like dey want to live, but now, dey feelin' sorry fo deyselves, an dey don feel nothin' fo nobody else, so dey do what dey can do to get what dey can get."

Henry then goes on to articulate the lack of certainty of his life when he says,

Yeah, we tied together in some way, but it ain't like a club. I mean, how I gon say to some other dude 'come over to my house' when I ain't got no house? How'm I gon say to some chick, 'come over to my pad' when I ain't got no pad? How'm I gon say, 'meet you after work' when I ain't got no work. Least not steady work. I'm gon say meet me down to the labor pool? Right! See what I mean? An one more thing. Some of y'all may be the boss, and somebody else'll work for you, maybe, but, everybody got somethin in common. See what I mean? An see, look a here. I ain't even got no watch. How'm I gon say "I'll see you bout seven" when I might not even know what day of the week it is. Or the month. I mean, see, if I lucks up and

gets to where he's at 7:00, then he might be thinkin its Monday and I'm thinkin' its Tuesday. Now what day we gon meet? I mean even if we say we gon meet Monday, how I'm gon know its Monday and it ain't Tuesday? I mean, I don't keep up with that stuff man."

As he has said before, Henry links his experience of the world of homeless people to unstable spatio-temporal linkages. Without stable and regularly occurring occasions for friendship events at spatio-temporal intersects that can be counted upon, there is no possibility of trust, and therefore no possibility of deeper friendships. From his vantage point, this inability is the basis for a lack of any positive and trusting friendship or relational or other structure and this lack of positive structure makes life unpredictable and uncertain, and hence frightening, if for no other reason than that it is impossible to learn whom one can trust when some are so untrustworthy.

As Angel, Henry, Jimmy, Billy Bob and others tell their stories, centering them around unpredictable spatio-temporal intersects, they have in common an acceptance of their world that enables them to plan for it in some instances and emotionally cope with it in others. Angel has transformed time into theological dimensions in which he expects no home here on earth, but is preparing for an eternal home. Henry continues to drink, but at the same time makes as secure as possible his cathole in the old warehouse and keeps a wary eye on others around so that he will be safe. Jimmy is somewhat different. He returns again and again to the theme of being alone. By depicting a life of isolation, Jimmy tells how he saves himself from temptation and danger. This way of coping with

an uncertain world is similar to many stories of those who live their life on the streets. Billy Bob is different still. Though he tells how he had ordered his life in spite of unpredictable spatio-temporal intersects, he also discloses how he ultimately locates his life on his own terms by lowering his expectations to reasonable levels and then, through giving up drinking, and reordering his life, establishes a lifestyle with which he is satisfied. All three of these men worked out a life that they consider meaningful. As they tell the stories of their lives, they tell of living alone and bothering no one. Out of fear and mistrust, both of self and others, they either construct or discover means of survival and use those means to construct lives of meaning in relation to the more prominent horizons to which they link their experience on the streets.

A singular significant characteristic of those who have come to terms with the spatio-temporal matrix of the homeless world is time on the streets. This does not constitute specific horizons for all of them, but I tell it as I recount my own horizons of meaning of homeless people. Angel, Billy Bob, Cy, Jimmy, and Henry are all in their 40's and 50's. All of these people have been on the streets, at least periodically, for several years. When they tell their stories, their horizons are deep and varied, but they all link back to experiences over time as they have come to terms with their homeless state. Angel looks to "bad times" when he moved from Louisiana to Florida and different southern cities in search of work. Finding none, and finding more and more alcohol, he loses his wife and family and finally becomes a sojourner of the streets. But he links his present

experience to that point in his mother's living room when God took the taste of beer out of his mouth. This power of God, which he references as primary from that point in his life until the present, provides the strength and hope that enable him to cope with this time of Satan's rule until God delivers him from all of this.

Cy links his experience as a homeless person to his leaving his home in 1988 because of drugs. He has resigned himself to life on the streets, although he does not like this life. Until prompted by our questions, he has "forgotten" the future, and his life of placelessness has simply become taken for granted. Without talking of hope, Jimmy has organized his life of placelessness outside of the spatio-temporal matrix of the domiciled world by adopting a life of solitude. Driven by fear of other homeless persons, and what they will do to him physically, and by fears of life under the influence of drugs, the temptation to which is always present in the company of other homeless persons, Jimmy has retreated to the life of a recluse, and finds comfort in his life alone. Billy Bob is again somewhat different from these others. He, like them, has come to terms with life outside of the structures of the domiciled world, but unlike them, he has achieved a modicum of comfort in his RV. Billy Bob's turning point occurred when he stopped drinking. With a life constructed around his own new found relevancies, he tells how he, painfully, has lowered his expectations to the point that they are realistic, and has worked to put his life in order. With his RV, his truck, and his pension, Billy Bob has developed a lifestyle outside of the conventional spatio-temporal matrix, but within one of his own making and liking,

where accountability and a job, both of which he could never handle, are minimized, and his freedom to wander is maximized. None of these men have escaped the need for the predictability provided by some spatio-temporal matrix, but they all tell of ways and means by which they have constructed their own and are able to survive to greater or lesser degrees of success and/or satisfaction, with a minimum of the constraints of the conventionally structured world.

Marie, at the other end of the spectrum, does not allude to social structure, or spatio-temporal linkages of life at all. She simply survives as well as possible by the barter of her body, and by the companionship of those who would use her. Deprived of socialization processes to form her perceptions and frames within any bounds of conventionality, Marie's world is born of an innocence that permits her to live adrift either in or out of the world of others, and the structures formed by the patterns of their appetites, without concern for how it is she might structure her world.

Dutch, Connie, and Trine typify those who link in varying ways to the spatio-temporal dimensions of the conventionally structured world. Dutch accomplishes this as a con-artist and a thief. Connie accomplishes it by dealing drugs, or doing whatever he has to do to survive in a world still dominated, albeit negatively, by linking to experiential realities of meaning still located in the world of those who are privileged and established. Trine expends his energies in his efforts to occupy the residual of the conventional world of the domiciled, that

world structured by spatio-historical matrices that leave little room for him or others like him.

A World Outside of the Law

The homeless world of the streets, as it is depicted in the stories of these homeless people, is a world that exists outside of the structured domiciled world. As they scan the contours of their lives, they see their world as structured by excluding behaviors from this world, both consciously and unconsciously on the part of those who are members of the structured world. The implications of this are several. For one thing, the structures of the domiciled world, such as time and moral order, are viewed as irrelevant to these chronically homeless people, and the meanings derived from the linkages to their own horizons of structurelessness inform their perceptions of the social world of domiciled persons. From this vantage point, the law, which grows out of the life of the structured world, and is related to its interests, becomes normative for the structured world, but remains irrelevant or even adversarial to those on the streets. For example, one of the purposes of the law is the protection of property. Chronically homeless people have little or no property and utilize residual space that is owned, or controlled, by those who live in the structured world, and thereby become objects of prosecution by the law. Or they use public space, which they see as being under the control of the law and the courts and law enforcement agencies. Because they understand that they have no control

over their space and can be evicted from it, harassed, or even arrested by the police, as Trine and Dutch told us, or because they see themselves as having no rights or power, as Trine told us, and because they articulate the stories of their lives as having no value, as told in the stories of Sadie and Joseph, these chronically homeless people see themselves as existing outside of the property structures of the social world. Since the use of property is intimately related to the law, they see themselves as existing outside of and without the protection of the law, and the law remains irrelevant to most, if not all, of the chronically homeless people. This division between the chronically homeless, who live outside of the law, and those they perceive as living within the law as they understand it, becomes one of the more significant characteristics of the relationship of street life to the domiciled world.

Moral Order

As those who live on the streets tell of their lives and their separateness from the structured world, they frequently allude to the conventional moral order of the structured world, but they do this in the context of its structures and their own relevancies and necessities as they understand them. From their perspective, the moral order of the conventional world is intimately related to its structures, and structures are related to privilege. This does not differ significantly from others who have theorized the power of structures and privilege. Although Wilson (1973), for example, does not specifically address

the question of the moral order, when he discusses the question of racism and its relationship to the social order, he links the issue of the preservation of privilege to power, and power resides in the established structured world. It would be consistent with this argument to see the moral order as being designed to protect the structured world from any change that modifies the system of power and privilege. The moral order grows over time out the relationships and interactions of those who have the power to shape that world, and much of it tends to be identified with the legal order, so that much of the moral order is in fact a part of a larger legal-moral order (Becker, 1973).

This is consistent with the understanding of the moral order of those who inhabit the streets. From their perspective, they see an intimate relationship of privilege to both power and moral order. As chronically homeless people are outside of the social structures of the domiciled world, they also link to experiential realities that inform their self-understanding of being outside of the legal and moral order of the domiciled world. Jimmy refers to this when he links the experience of life on the streets to the experiences of his earlier life and recalls his friends who no longer want anything to do with him. Shorty, when he speaks of his family, feels a sense of shame and intentionally stays away from their section of town when he is in his homeless mode. And Billy Bob spatially and temporally delineates his world of work from his family, recalling that, if they knew of his work, they would likely be shocked and gossip about him.

But more importantly, these people frequently link their stories to the moral order of the structured world and at times they reference it's tenets to evaluate their own behaviors. Dutch utilizes the conventional moral order when he talks of stealing and says "that's bank robbing stuff." Billy Bob remembers his sense of shame as a child when he engaged in male prostitution in order to survive. Jimmy articulates his understanding of the moral order with exceptional clarity when he talks of the rules of the conventional world under which he was reared:

Jimmy: **No, cause I was raised under rules...you know...that's...you got to have rules in order to live. Now, sometimes like I told you, you get tired...**

Q: **Sometimes...yeah**

Jimmy: **Cause it's a rule you got to pay your taxes, it's a rule..you know, they call it law...you know, it's a rule..you know.. People got tired of that...**

Only knowing the rules and the conventional moral order is not to say that it remains a top priority for them, however, for they suspend the conventional moral order of the structured world when it stands in the way of their own more pressing relevancies. This is, for many of them, a matter of necessity as they tell their stories in myriad ways, "You do what you gotta do," without consideration for what is "right." As the conventional moral order of the domiciled world is outside of their relevancies, they attend first to their priorities. This means that the conventional moral order is temporarily suspended in the face of what they

consider the imperatives of their lives. Since these imperatives never seem to be sufficiently met, the moral order is more or less permanently in a state of suspension.

The question then arises, "What are their relevancies?" Basic to these is simple survival. Connie expresses this when he talks of selling drugs out of necessity. He sees the structures of the legal-moral world as being in the interest of the elite, and so he owes no allegiance to its codes. A second way of expressing their relevancies is to speak of the necessity of resources for that survival. As Tommy viewed the man fighting with the rat in the dumpster for food, he described the conflict with the rat as a struggle for food as a resource. Or as Bub describes his life as "a hunter-gatherer", he is again depicting the primacy of food as a primary resource for living.

These are all very tangible resources, however. But there are other relevancies in terms of resources. Marie tells of trading access to her body for safety and companionship. Billy Bob, Shorty, and Ronald, in different ways, talk of the importance of turf. Billy Bob uses and maintains vacant space, and in the process keeps it safe from others. Shorty sees a section of town as his turf because he sees it as familiar territory. Ronald protects an area from "beggars" to maintain the integrity of his turf. As George linked his present life to the world of his immediately preceding horizons, he did so in such a way as to talk of resources he needed for the representation of self. Finally, there is the relevance of drugs and alcohol as resources. When these are seen as concrete

resources, they are needed for the maintenance of addictive lifestyles. But there is significant linkages to these as modes of self-medication, so that they become relevant as a resource for coping and maintaining their self esteem as Dutch demonstrates when he lives with drug dealers, and gains from them a sense of worth by selling drugs for them.

Violence

The world of the streets, when viewed from the horizons to which these people have linked their experience of homelessness, is a world of violence. This is portrayed by the women who experience violence at the hands of the men who provide them with drugs or protection. It is described by Henry and Jimmy when they point to scars that they received at the hands of other homeless people. Dutch tells of violence, without naming its origin, when he briefly mentions the murder of one of his colleagues who had lived in the bush. And Trine tells of violence at the hands of the police, who, as he tells his story, act as agents of the structured world, making unreasonable arrests and doing other things that are geared to "hassle the homeless," with the goal of "running them out of town." Because the world of the streets is a world of violence, it is a world of uncertainty, and a world of danger. And because it is a world of uncertainty and danger, it becomes for the homeless a world that produces fear.

Alcohol and Drugs

One of the most broadly referenced characteristics of the chronically homeless people with whom I have spoken is drugs and alcohol. Most of those interviewed are heavily influenced by drugs and alcohol. At times, the respondents reported that 50% are drug addicts or alcoholics, but this is the figure that is commonly applied to all homeless people, including children and families who live in shelters. However, among those with whom I have spoken, practically all abuse these substances, and those who don't, for example, Angel and Billy Bob, perceive that most other chronically homeless people are either alcoholics or drug addicts. During the times that I have been "in the field," most of the people whom I have encountered say that they use drugs or alcohol, and most of those admit to frequent abuse, if not addiction.

There are also those who portray their lives as formerly addicted. Billy Bob and Angel as examples of these. The balance of those interviewed, however, even if it does not surface in the interview, appear to be heavily involved with some form of mood altering chemicals.

One way of thinking about drugs and alcohol is that those who use or "abuse" them congregate in certain places. As Billy Bob says, if one's exposure is limited to those places where they congregate, then it is quite natural to find an exceptionally high incidence of them. On the other hand, among chronically homeless people whose lives are centered in shelters or other agencies, drugs and alcohol also occupy a prominent place there.

This has serious implications for these people, according to their own stories. As Angel links the world of homeless people to his horizons that span some number of years, he sees the homeless world as peopled with those who don't want to work, who sleep all day, and whose lives have otherwise been negatively impacted by drugs and alcohol. When Shorty tells his story, he skillfully tells it in such a way as to demonstrate the growing place of drugs in his life, enabling the listener to "watch" the movement of drugs to the center of his life, where they reshaped friendships, family relationships, work, income, and geography. The same is true for Sadie, who talks of her willingness to be exposed to life on the streets, because "that's where the drugs are."

Whether use and abuse of drugs and alcohol are cause or effect is difficult if not impossible to ascertain. Jimmy tells of leaving his house in 1988 when something "just snapped." Without telling of his drug or alcohol involvement prior to that, he says that from that time onward, he has struggled with both alcohol and drugs. As one listens to the words of Billy Bob, it is tempting to think of him as sedating his pain and shame from his life of prostitution.

In listening to the words of Dutch, the picture is painted in more vivid detail, but not materially different. As he talks of his life outside of the structured world, he says, "I had no self esteem. I wasn't doing the right thing. I was living a bad life. As long as I was drunk I could tolerate it. I could relate to other street

people, but not really. I felt differently. I knew I was there because of my drug and alcohol problem."

Fear

Without elaborating it in detail, any summary of the experiences of homeless people that reaches to their horizons of emotional life will include fear. For those with whom I have talked personally fear is indeed at the center of their life. These people fear many things as it defines many of their waking hours, and at times their sleeping.

Not the least of their concerns is their fear of and safety from the acts of other homeless people. Among those with whom I have spoken, they articulate concern and fear in two directions. First there is the fear of those who have no regard for the life or limb of others. While these people are rare, life on the streets, which is anonymous, has become a haven for those who are "running from the law." Many of these try to maintain their anonymity, but others do not. Those homeless people who "use" their status of running from the law, or otherwise become publicly known for their violence, evoke fear in many homeless people. There are two ways in which these people can be identified. In order to stay at the missions, they are required to clear with the police, meaning that they must prove that there are no outstanding warrants for their arrest or that they are otherwise wanted by the law. When they fail in their efforts to "clear", this becomes known among the homeless population. The

other primary way they are known is by self admission. As they sit around the parks, or the campfires in the hobo camps, they sometimes tell of their criminal exploits or other activities outside of the law. Either way, they often become feared.

Even greater fear of other homeless people is evoked by another group: those who experience the urgency of their homeless situation and "do what they gotta do." These also are outside of the structures of the domiciled world and experience the same alienation from the conventional social order. On the other hand, they, like other homeless people know the impotence of the laws of the conventional world within the homeless world, and they also know the vacuousness of the law of the streets. Homeless people tell of the unpredictability of these people. For example, Jimmy tells of people taking what they feel is necessary by injuring another in order to obtain it.

Jimmy: Ummm...naw...I hate to trust people cause everybody has got..you know, everybody has got their own way of surviving. And if its necessary, they'll knock you in the head, if you got something and they want it...they'd get you...

Q: Has it ever happened to you

Jimmy: Yeahhhh...I got a knot upside my head right now. There it is right there...

Henry reports the same fear of others who will cause injury to others to get what they want, or feel that they need. He adds another dimension to the motivation of those whom he fears, however, and that is feeling sorry for themselves.

Q: How do you mean “use t’ could?”

Henry: I mean, back when I first started livin out here, I didn't have no trouble wid' nobody. But now, I do. Back den, it was people was jus livin like dey want to live, but now, dey feelin' sorry fo deyselves, an dey don feel nothin' fo nobody else, so dey do what dey can do to get what dey can get.

Q: What kinds of things have happened to you?

Henry: Oh, man, I been cut, I been hit up side d' head wit a boad, I been pushed off ov a buildin, I been, oh, man, I been done mos everthing to you can do to a man. I mean dey do anything to you. See dis. [points to a large scar on his arm.] Dat's where one dude pour lighter fluid on me an burn me to make me move so he could get my stuff.

Q: Is everybody like this out here?

Henry: No, not mos of em. Mos of em leave you lone. But some of em ain't like dat, an you can't tell who is an who ain't. So, less you knows em, you leaves em alone.

Henry attributes the general state of fear that prevails on the streets among homeless people to the instability of time and place, saying that they have no way of getting to know others. Without knowing others, fear dictates that they leave others alone.

Cindy relates her experience of fear, and that of other women, to the fear that women in search of drugs experience when their desire for drugs leads them to places of danger. She tells of a woman who was brutally murdered in the process of obtaining drugs. Others tell of rape, or other forms of sexual exploitation when in the quest for drugs.

Practically all of this activity is described by Henry, Jimmy, Cindy, or others as resulting from the absence of structured authority to enforce laws that would protect people who live on the streets. Because of this, there are other experiential realities to which they link their experience of fear. Being outside of the structured social world, they cannot count on the police, as the police are a part of the structure that exists for the benefit of the domiciled world. Since they operate in ways that are outside of, or even counter to the ways of the domiciled and "clutter up the place," or otherwise interrupt the conventional social order of the domiciled world, they are guided by the perception that they are threatening to the domiciled and are seen as enemies of that world and objects of persecution by the police. This perception leads them to fear the police as much as they fear other homeless persons. Dutch, referring to another place (Hawaii) articulates this when he tells of his fears of the police.

Dutch: **Safe from the police. that's the only thing. Other people. Well I'd consider that. But the way I'd look at it, nobody would want anything I had. It was the police. I always had warrants out. I didn't want to become known as a vagrant. We just wanted to be safe from the police. That's what we were afraid of-- the police. They'd put you in prison and you weren't free. If there were warrants out for me, or if they arrested me, they'd get my wallet and i.d., so I'd give them a fake name. If there were no warrants out for me, I'd give my real name to them.**

Trine echos this same theme when he talks of his fear of the police. He couches his fear in his perception of the police being representatives of the establishment and he and other homeless people being the objects of their persecution as they arrest them on trumped up charges, cut up their tents or

shelters, and generally make their lives miserable. Being homeless, he talks of no rights and no power, and consequently being helpless in the face of police harassment.

In telling their stories that reveal the origins of their fear, these people periodically link the narratives of their lives to events in which they experience grief, humor, joy, or pain. These interludes, however, provide only brief periods of respite from the staple of their emotional diet, which is fear.

Sex and Gender

In these narrative interviews, women are frequently portrayed as helpless and dependent on men. One of the reasons the women in this study are portrayed as highly sexual and helpless is that they are the most vulnerable of homeless women. There are a number of facilities for women who are homeless, so that many women who are chronically homeless have alternative living facilities. In addition, I had little access to women. Virtually all of the women interviewed in this study were included in this narrative. I have effectively no idea of the helplessness or sexual habits of women who live in shelters or of others who live on the streets. For these reasons, the "sample" to which I had access is highly biased. I do not see that women are more sexually active than men, but two things influence the overwhelming incidence of sexual promiscuity in this particular portrayal of the narrative lives of these women: first, they are more willing to talk about sexual events as they seem to focus

more on experiences that include, or center around, sex. This is understandable as sexual activity has become for them both an avenue of access to resources and the occasion of violence. A second reason is that, with the absence of normal family life and a lack of a defined moral order, there are few prohibitions against sexual promiscuity.

These narrative lives are distinctly gendered. The narrative lives of the women interviewed center primarily around sex. When drugs are at the center of their life, a unique economic system is created in which sex becomes a commodity with which to barter for drugs. Billy Bob serves as an example. Sex with prostitutes is bartered as he did handyman work for them. Consistently in the lives of Cindy, and Marie, sex and sexual favors are little more than barter.

Without comparison to normative standards for determining sexual behavior, much of the sexual encounters described by the women appear through conventional perspectives as violent and/or bizarre. For example, Sadie tells of the woman who is forced to have a form of sexual interaction with a dog. Lula describes how she is forced by her boyfriend to have sex with his other friends, or tells of the young woman who was murdered with her breasts and genitals mutilated. Sadie tells of women exploiting and using women in the pursuit of drugs by telling how a woman who is unattractive to other women may take along another woman for barter to a place where she may buy crack, and offer this woman up for barter.

Sex, in these interviews, regardless of how it is defined, becomes a part of the taken for granted world view and lifestyle of these women. As Billy Bob says, they have something men want. It's not whether or not they "like" it, or whether or not they think of it as a need. It's simply there.

As with the men, when women live outside of the structured world and its accompanying law, they feel that there is no protection for them. They tell of feeling that it's futile to go to the police because of their fear that they will be apprehended for drugs. Thus, as long as they are drug involved, they both fear and avoid the police. A consensus of their stories suggests that if they weren't drug involved, they wouldn't be experiencing the world of which they tell.

Relationships

For the uninitiated, the first, and perhaps the more lasting impression of the world of homeless people is that it is a lonely world. When the respondents in this study speak of family, friendships, or other relationships that are usually associated with trust, they frequently speak of isolation, fear, and mistrust. Consequently, they frequently live alone, or typify themselves as loners.

This is not to say that these people have no relationships. Within the structured world, the relationships between homeless and domiciled are primarily with family. These relationships are, however, typically strained, or highly conditional. Cy is able to stay as a guest with his sister for brief periods of time, but otherwise spends nights on her front porch. Angel's family in

Louisiana wants him to come "home" and live with them, but he tires of their care taking. As Shorty tells his story, he speaks of having continuing relationships with his family, and periodically goes to the homes of family members to visit, or even to wash clothes, but these relationships are clouded by shame because of his drug usage and his being homeless. Cindy's story includes a sense of entitlement to her mother's home, but she chooses not to stay there as that would entail following rules that she does not want to follow. Marie's story includes a continuing relationship with her mother, but her mother's relationship in the domiciled world is at best questionable as she shifts from boyfriend to boyfriend. She does speak of her sisters, but she never defines her relationship with them in any detail. Billy Bob tells a story that includes intermittent homelessness and stability. During periods in his life he sometimes maintained his relationships with his ex-wife, with prostitutes, or with adopted families, but, as he says, he was never able to maintain these relationships for long periods of time. The person who tells of the strongest relationships is George, who maintains a relationship with a girlfriend who shares an apartment with her sister, has a relationship with his "shrink," who is "running a tab on him because of his financial situation, and has periodic relationships with people who inhabit the bar to which he goes and talks without their knowledge of his being homeless.

Some of the relationships between homeless persons and the domiciled world can only be characterized in general terms. Dutch has a general

relationship with the domiciled world in which he tells of being relatively involved in that world as a con man, a thief, or as an object of pity. Periodically he tells of having been employed as a cab driver. Otherwise, his relationship with the domiciled world is typified by negative interactions. Trine tells of much the same type of negative relationship with the domiciled world. His relationship with the structured world is primarily negative as his interaction is with the police and the courts. The resultant generalized relationship is adversarial and antagonistic. Joseph and Mose tell of exploitation in the world of work when they tell of exploitation and forced work on farms, some of which are out of state. Connie is attempting to become reestablished in the structured world of work, but at the time of his telling, this has not yet happened. Neither Ronald nor Billy Bob express negative sentiments toward the structured world, and even positively talk of times they actively protect and benefit parts of the structured world. In all of these relationships, both specific and general, however, the absence of relationships is more marked than their presence. In general, these stories tell of exclusion, of negative interaction, exploitation, or mutual exploitation, and practically impenetrable barriers between those who live on the streets and those who inhabit the domiciled world.

Within the homeless world, experience of the world of the streets is highly variable. Some, such as Jimmy, or Henry, have few if any relationships, and talk of preferring to be alone. With the instability and uncertainty of time and place, there is no patterned means of developing relationships, and with the quality of

fear that characterizes their lives, these people are reluctant to attempt permanent or in-depth relationships, as Henry and Jimmy show. This is further accentuated by the scarcity of goods that breeds theft and violence, and eventuates in a social world where mistrust is the rule.

At best, the relationships on the streets are temporary, as Marie demonstrates in the story she tells. Billy Bob points to this also, as he tells how romantic or sexual relationships are formed quickly and are intense because of the lack of occasion and circumstance for permanence.

Frequently, relationships on the streets are, by the standards of the structured or domiciled world, characterized by exploitation and mistrust. Many of these relationships between men and women are developed on the basis of sexual appetites, as per Lula, Marie or Sadie. "Friendships" can't exist and at best can only be characterized as mere affiliations because trust is not possible, as Jimmy and Henry describe. The exceptions to this are Trine, Dutch, and, to a small degree, Shorty. Trine points to those around him as friends in their common adversarial stance toward the structured world, Dutch points to a group of people as "like family" in their sharing of food and other resources, and Shorty tells of a tramp circle of which he is a member, and an area of the city in which familiarity breeds a measure of a sense of safety and a reduction in fear.

Aside from the rare exceptions, with strained or unbalanced relationships with those in the structured world, and unstable, exploitative, and ephemeral relationships in the homeless world, these members of the world of the streets

tend to live much of their life alone. Living outside of any definable community and incapable of developing structures that would be helpful in developing a stable moral order or feelings of closeness or affiliation, they tend to be fearful of each other and wary of exploitation by members of the domiciled world.

Socialization -- Maladaptation -- Adaptation

In addition to the organizing pattern discussed under Spatio-Temporal Intersects and Matrices, another organizing pattern that manifests itself throughout the narrated stories that these chronically homeless people tell depicts a continuum from socialization to maladaptation to resocialization or adaptation. Throughout these stories, there are references to normative standards of behavior, both within the domiciled world and within the homeless world. Most of these people have been socialized into the domiciled world to some degree, either in childhood, or in adulthood, and this socialization comes to stand in contrast to the world view and lifestyle of the homeless world. The obvious exception to this is Marie. Marie is portrayed by Tommy as possibly being mentally impaired, and as we listened to her, our initial impression might well have been the same. However, Marie's is the one story that depicts a person reared from childhood in the world of homeless drug addicts. She has been socialized sufficiently to learn the ways of her mother, and of the people with whom her mother interacts. There is no indication in her story, however, of any lasting, or in-depth, socialization into the domiciled world. Even the time

spent living with her grandmother is minimized in her story. By the time she tells her story, any socialization into the domiciled world that has taken place has been obscured. From her self depiction, it is difficult to determine whether she is mentally impaired, or whether her affect is the product of socialization to the streets. It is tempting to suggest that the latter is at least primary in her development, as her world view and behavior is highly integrated, if that be an appropriate way to phrase it, into the world of which she is a part. As a consequence, she displays no conflict with her world, no relationship with, or alienation from, the domiciled world, and thus no sense of shame. What to us who listened to her seemed horrific, she took for granted. There is no discomfort with her circumstances, and no impetus to change her life. Her adaptation seems to be the product of her socialization.

At the other end of the continuum are the stories of Henry, Jimmy, Bub, and Billy Bob. Henry has adapted to the world of homeless people, and entertains no thoughts of changing his life. He has been an alcoholic for years, and has lived on the streets for years. He has attempted to change his life, but has failed. Now, as he lives his middle years, and looks to the remainder of his life, he has ceased trying to change. In his own way, Henry has adapted to the homeless world and his place within it as his lot in life. He is clear as he articulates this. "Like I done said. I done tried gettin off of d' booze. But seems like I jus can't do it, so dis is my world fo keeps. I may not like it, but it my world. An I got to live it out. Live in it an die in it."

Jimmy has almost the same perspective on himself as he views the world.

He has spent years battling drugs, and at the same time has spent his time socializing with people who regularly use drugs. Because of the large numbers and the influence of those who drink and use drugs, his has been a losing battle. But Jimmy also shares the mistrust of others on the streets that is common to many of the homeless people. At one point in his story, he says that, although groups of homeless people might be seen socializing and appearing to be friends, they are not to be trusted. For these two reasons, Jimmy reiterates again and again that he would rather be alone than associate with others.

But Jimmy has a history he connects to his present life, as he reflects on past events. He recalls a time in his past when he friendships with "more respectable folk," and lifestyle that centered around making good money driving a truck. As he contrasts his present life to that former time, Jimmy almost displays a sense of shame when he says,

No...I prefer to be alone. You know, I'm not looking for friends, to tell the truth. The type of people I had before to be with at this time in my...my lifestyle is not up to their ...their standards, and you know, I mean, I ain't got nothing...I ain't got no money; I ain't got no place to stay; you know, stuff like that...you know, they don't want to be bothered. You know.

With his sense of shame, and his history of drug usage, Jimmy shows no indication of entertaining the possibility of change. In the end, speaking of the tendency of most homeless people to remain "where they are," and almost autobiographically, Jimmy says "Well, you know...you...sometimes, some people

get contented with the way they are. Cause they feel like they don't know how to do...they can't get any better...do any better..." Whether it is more properly called adaptation or resignation, Jimmy sees himself as a long time and permanent resident of the streets.

Bub is another person who, at least for the time being, displays a kind of comfort with his homeless state, and a significant level of adaptation. Bub has not been homeless for any extended time, as his world fell apart only about a year prior to the interview, but he has developed at least a quasi permanent lifestyle with which he appears to be content. Bub is a fisherman. Utilizing his knowledge of "the hunters and gathers," his childhood skill with a slingshot, and training he was given on survival while in the military, Bub has developed a world and a lifestyle built around hunting and fishing. He also appears to live most of his life as a loner. Survival for him, however, is a way of life he has accepted, and he indicates no unhappiness with his status. He portrays himself as being content with his life, and with the world as he experiences it. Throughout his story, Bub paints the picture of himself as one who has simplified his life to include activities that are important to him, and he is at home in his world. To quote him again, directly, "You want to know the truth? Hell no, I ain't homeless. I live out here in the good Lawd's world with all his creatures, and I eats the food he sends my way."

Henry and Jimmy have seemingly adapted to their world and see no real possibility of change, although they talk of a life alone, and one with which they

are somewhat dissatisfied. Bub has adapted to his world, but talks of his contentment with it.

Billy Bob is at the end of the spectrum of those who have adapted to the social world of homeless people. Experiencing the fear of life alone on the streets as a child, the necessity of engaging in prostitution to survive, the loneliness and lack of family as both child and adult, and a life of periodic homelessness because of alcoholism, Billy Bob spent much of his adult life on the streets, unhappy with his lot, but sedating himself with "booze." Through relatively intense interaction with others who have been socialized into the domiciled world (military experience, periodic employment, some of which lasted for some extended periods of time, and interaction through prostitution, both as male prostitute and with female prostitutes) and his own resourcefulness, Billy Bob has had some success in living in the domiciled world. However, he has never been able to hold on to a job, family, relationships, or other components of a successful life in the domiciled world for a sufficient length of time to overcome his self understanding as a homeless person. However, as he told me his story, Billy Bob was about as well adapted to life as he might be. As he narrates his life, he tells of overcoming his problem with alcohol, and saving enough from his pension to buy an RV trailer and a truck. By lowering his expectations and learning to live within the scope of his resources Billy Bob has carved out a life with which he is happy, and the picture of his life that he depicts leaves the

listener with the clear impression that he has settled into a lifestyle with which he is content, and not likely to change.

While the extremes of the continuum of socialization to resocialization or adaptation are reasonably articulated, these do not characterize the lives of most of the homeless people with whom I have spoken. Most of the others are located somewhere along this continuum, with consequent variations in expressions of alienation, of shame, of ambition, and comfort with life on the streets. Examples of these are Sadie, Trine, Connie, Dutch, George, and Shorty. As they tell their stories, there are several common themes. One primary theme is that their lives are uncertain. While this may be true for many of the others along the continuum, the uncertainty of life on the streets has been an obstacle to adaptation to which they cannot adjust.

Sadie is a woman who has been on the streets. As a woman deeply involved with drugs, she has experienced the acquisition of drugs as a priority in her life. But drugs are illegal, and the presence and acquisition of drugs is accompanied by other illegal activities. More importantly, however, women in search of drugs are placed in a vulnerable position because of the desire for sexual favors by many who traffic in drugs. As drugs assume a higher priority for women, these women place themselves in positions where they are exploited by those who deal in drugs, being willing to sacrifice safety, dignity, and health in their search. In the story she tells, Sadie has experienced all of this. She has known of fear through hearing of the death of another woman who was caught

up in the world of drugs. She has experienced disappointment in her personal relationships as they were with men who were interested in sexual variation that precluded intimacy or commitment and left her feeling fearful and victimized. As her life story has turned about the uncertainty and fear of life on the streets, she has become open to a religious conversion experience. This has occurred before, but now she tells of being sufficiently traumatized to facilitate a religious experience that she hopes will shape a broader life of home, intimate relationships, stability and safety. To accomplish this, she has become involved in a religiously oriented drug rehabilitation program. In her story, Sadie does not express undue alienation from the broader social world, the world of the streets, or men in general. Ironically, her life has a strange caste of calm about it. As she tells her story, she pictures herself as calm, and at ease with the world when compared to many others with whom we spoke. Whether Sadie succeeds in changing her life permanently remains open to conjecture at the time of the interview.

Dutch, like Sadie, has been undergoing drug rehabilitation. His path to rehabilitation is different, however. Dutch had been arrested for theft. During his pre-sentence investigation he had revealed to those who questioned him his use of drugs for many years. He had been offered drug rehabilitation as an alternative to sentencing, which he accepted.

Dutch had been familiar with money during his childhood years, having been reared in affluence. He had also been educated at a highly regarded prep

school, and had been reared in an intact, although conflicted, family.

Collectively, his time growing up had provided him with horizons to which he could contrast his experience of homelessness and life on the streets. It was not directly to the life of affluence, education, and family life that Dutch appealed, however, in contrasting life on the streets. The linkage was indirect as he linked to the sense of beauty and calm he remembered as a part of that life.

That contrasting linkage in Dutch's story stands his life on the streets in poor stead. For some time, life on the streets had been filled with excitement, adventure, and freedom. Now, as he tells it, that has all changed. At the time of his interview, Dutch spoke of his fear of the police, fear of others, who might do him harm, and fatigue with the "rat race." He has not adapted to life on the streets, but has lacked the necessary motivation to reestablish his life otherwise. Now, he has completed a part of a drug rehabilitation program, but his future remains clouded and questionable as he is making plans to orient to the streets once again.

Shorty has learned about life on the streets, but experiences shame and, while in a drug rehabilitation program in a shelter, also talks of change. Shorty has experienced a caring family in his childhood that extends to the present. He also links his present world to success in work, experience with his own family as a family man, and friendships that he valued. In contrast to these horizons, his life as of late has centered around drugs, the consequent erratic pattern of work, living in catholes, struggling to find food, confronting the elements of

nature, and experiencing shame as he thinks about family and friends. Shorty's life has become one with which he is deeply dissatisfied. Clearly he has not adapted well to life on the streets. As he looks to those horizons, he has admitted himself to a drug rehabilitation program. His stay there has been short thus far, and he is experiencing hope that his life will change.

George portrays himself as adapting to the lifestyle that he has carved out. As he tells his story, he carefully presents himself as different in many respects from those who typify homelessness. As he displays his life through the telling of his story, George distances himself from other homeless people, arguing, as it were, that this lifestyle is a matter of choice. Yet, he is not convincing when he portrays himself as happy with his life. When we hear his story, we hear a person with many resources, both financially and intellectually, but who still looks to a time when he will have a job again. In the interim, he spends his time doing things that would connote a middle class status, with a girlfriend, and "getting his head straight," all of which suggest that the life of a homeless person, albeit a life that he has chosen, is not ultimately to his liking, and eventually one he hopes will change. His anger is directed at his parents, apparently for many reasons, but all of which are typified in that they had him "Baker acted." Because of his lack of adaptation to life on the streets, and his failure to change his situation thus far, George remains an unstable person without sufficient direction to ameliorate his difficulties, and one whose life

continues to some degree in a state of limbo, thus typifying the life of homeless persons in some ways, despite his efforts to portray his life to the contrary.

Trine, who is angry at the police, is another instance of variation within the life of homeless people in their adaptation to life on the streets. From Trine's story, we know little or nothing of his past, except that he has been on the streets out at the beach for several years. What is different in his adaptation is his perception that others in the domiciled world are his enemies, and want to rid the area of him and others like him who are homeless. Trine, through a variety of experiences, has been sufficiently socialized to carry on a lucid conversation, but it is centered in large part around his anger toward the police, the courts, and the criminal justice system. In viewing the contours of his world, he sees police who go out of their way to make his life miserable, police who falsely arrest homeless people, such as his girlfriend, judges who are little more than silly when they convict someone of DUI on a bicycle, and police who abuse their power by destroying the few belongings homeless people have when they cut up their tents. In Trine's story, as he portrays himself, he is dissatisfied, but not so much with himself as with the structured world with which he is forced to interface. If only those people would change, the quality of his life would be immeasurably enhanced. This dissatisfaction is the source of his lack of adaptation. No where in his story does Trine express dissatisfaction or lack of adaptation to his own lifestyle. Nor does he speak of any possible change in his lifestyle. That is fixed, and will likely stay unsatisfactory to him until and unless

the world around him changes. Until it does change, he is highly dissatisfied with the world, and his dissatisfaction produces frustration and anger.

The final example of failure to adapt to the homeless lifestyle from these interviews is Connie, who is angry with the structured world in general. The horizon to which he links his present situation is his time as a young employee of a corporation in Jacksonville. Connie looks to this experience and sees business activity as oriented to the well-being of the privileged and the elite. Connie had been socialized to the norms of the broader society and believed that if he played by the rules, his would be a good life. He had played by the rules by going to a local business college and studying accounting and bookkeeping. He was employed by a construction company, worked hard, and when the opportunity came, was promoted. His only "fault" regarding the rules was that he tried too hard to do his job, doing what he could to both trust his superior and to manage the books in ways the superior wanted. All of this was within the normative boundaries he believed to be authentically those of the social order. However, he was set up as the "fall guy" for his superior, and was arrested and convicted for embezzlement. When he was released, he dealt drugs, which reflected his perception that this was all an ex-con could do. After being arrested and serving time for this, he was again released and then arrested for being a conspirator to a burglary. This history all has its roots in his being unjustly arrested and convicted for the original charge of embezzlement. Connie remains angry. He is dissatisfied with the homeless lifestyle that he has

come to, but sees the cards stacked against him. From his story, he sees no way he can reestablish himself, and, alienated from the structured social world, feels entitled to do whatever he has to do to survive. In his story, Connie portrays himself as one more variation of those within the homeless population who have not adapted to their lifestyle and he talks of change. Yet change remains doubtful.

Conclusion

These narrative stories of the lives of homeless people together constitute a story of its own. As a fellow human being, to hear their stories is to hear stories of human experience that is at times painful, at times humorous, at times disgusting, at times celebrative, at times sad, or at times perplexing. It is similar to the stories of the domiciled. These people live varied and complex lives, organizing their lives around contingencies and themes that are frequently outside the boundaries of what would be considered by most as normal social life. However, in response to these contingencies, these people frequently display creativity, wisdom, and at times compassion.

I have not attempted to generalize to the broader homeless population in this project, as the methodology does not permit generalization. But the project has outlined portions of the parameters of homeless life. It has shown once again that homeless life cannot be comprehended in unilateral simplicity, nor in singular causal terms, nor in terms of universal horizons of meaning. The

indigenous meanings of homeless life from the perspective of those who live on the streets, as with any other domain of social life, is best understood by a multi-dimensional, multi-perspectival approach. It is hoped that this project contributes to that understanding.

As I have gone through the world of homeless people in doing the work of this project, my own feelings and affect have at times shifted, and at times have driven me to depression, and at times to joy and laughter. As I have listened to these stories, I have identified with some, and have not been able to identify with others. In the final analysis, I have perhaps most closely identified with one of the perceptions of Dutch, in that I also felt that I was going from world to world, for that has been what it has been like. Shifting worlds. Going from the world of the domiciled to the world of the streets. It has been like I was a different person whenever I was on the streets, by myself or with one of my respondents—but basically the same.

APPENDIX

HOMELESS STUDY INTERVIEW GUIDE

In beginning the interview, introduce yourself and say that you are conducting the interview as a part of a project being conducted for the University of North Florida. Ask them their name, and be sure to tell them (on tape) that their identity is to be kept confidential and that they will remain anonymous. The only ones who might know of their name are members of the research team. They may use their own, or a fictitious, name. Then explain to them the Consent Form and ask them to sign this document. (Instructions are on top of the form.)

Name of Person being interviewed: (pseudonym) _____

Personal Data of Person who is Interviewed: (May be filled out with or without asking the person directly.)

Age of person interviewed: (Approximate, if not asked directly.)

Race of person interviewed: (Approximate, if not asked directly.)

Sex of person interviewed:

Location of Interview:

Interviewer: Affiliation:

General impressions of person interviewed:

NARRATIVE GUIDE

Life in General

1. Everyone has a life story. Tell me about your life in about twenty minutes or so, if you can. Begin wherever you'd like and include whatever you wish.
2. What were the most important turning points in your life?

3. Tell me about the happiest points in your life.
4. What about the saddest points?
5. Who've been the most important people in your life?
6. Who are you closest to now?
7. What does "family" mean to you?
8. What does "home" mean to you?

Life on the Streets

9. Where did you stay last night?
Where do you usually stay?
10. Do you ever wonder about having a permanent place of your own, or a place you could call your own?
11. How do you stay in touch with your friends and family?
12. How did you come to be living like you are now?
13. As you think of the ways in which you spend your days, what kinds of things do you think about?
14. Describe a typical day in your life now.
The people you meet on the streets. Others.
The quality of life on the streets.
15. How do you spend your time during the day?
During the night?
Do you ever think about time?
What does time mean to you?

16. How do you fit into the city?

What does the city look like to you from where you are?

How do you get around in Jacksonville?

What parts of Jacksonville do you spend your time in?

What kinds of things, places, buildings, etc. do you think about when you think of your life in Jacksonville?

What's your position in relation to everything else that's going on in Jacksonville?

17. Do you ever think about your race when you're on the streets?

What kinds of things do you think about when you think about your race?

The race of others?

Do you ever see people treated badly because of their race?

18. Do you, or have you ever traveled?

(If yes to the previous question) To what places do you go? How do you travel?

19. How do you support yourself? (Earn money, obtain money, obtain the resources you need?)

20. Where do you get your food?

How do you do your laundry?

What do you do for entertainment?

What do you do for fun?

What about medical care?

21. What does your life look like from where you are now?

Life Summary

22. If you could live your life over, what would you do differently?
23. How do you explain what's happened to you over your life?
24. If you had the opportunity to write the story of your life, would the chapters be about? Chapter 1? Chapter 2? What about the last chapter?

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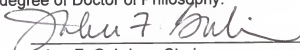
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

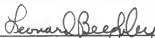
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



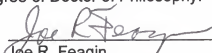
Jaber F. Gubrium, Chair
Professor of Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Leonard Beeghly
Professor of Sociology

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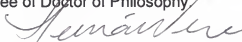
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Ofelia Schutte
Professor of Philosophy

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